■ METRO / A18

14 kids in Tondo hospitalized for eating 'tuba-tuba' fruit

■ ACROSS / A16

Cops in Quezon province admit jueteng back via guerilla type operations

■ WORLD / A10

California executes sick death row inmate, oldest at 76

■ 2bU! / C1

10 years after 'Bridget Jones', there's no stopping chick lit; now there's the Chinovela

Parrot blamed for breakup: It squawked on secret lover

DALDAL KASI!

LONDON—A TALKATIVE parrot is being blamed for the breakup of a couple's relationship after squawking the name of the woman's secret lover.

Ziggy, an 8-year-old African grey, prompted a confession from

PARROT/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, January 18, 2006 ★★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 41 P18 website: www.inq7.net

BI throws out alien rap vs ABS-CBN's news head

By Leila B. Salaverria and Marinel R. Cruz

A TELEVISION WORKER PREVIOUSLY ASSOCIATED with ABS-CBN yesterday sought the deportation of the network's News and Current Affairs head Maria Ressa on the grounds that she was a foreigner without a proper permit to work in the country.

But the Bureau of Immigration tossed out

BI THROWS/ A8

It's official: US says no

Embassy rejects RP request to take custody of 4 GIs in rape

By Volt Contreras and Armand N. Nocum
in Manila
and Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

THE US EMBASSY HAS refused to relinquish custody of the four American Marines accused of rape, but the judge in charge of the case said this would actually quicken the pace of the trial.

"That's their right," Judge Renato Dilag of Olongapo Regional Trial Court Branch 73 said yesterday in reaction to the embassy's refusal to turn over Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpentier and Lance Corporals Daniel Smith, Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis. All were charged with raping a Filipino woman on Nov. 1 at the Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales.

"Puwedeng mapabilis (This could speed up the case)," Dilag said, adding that the accused could now be considered to have surrendered to the proper authorities.

He said that after this had been made clear to the defense lawyers, he would schedule the arraignment of the accused.

But first, he said, he had to resolve the motions filed by a defense lawyer and the public prosecutors.

The US Embassy had been stonewalling on the Philippine government's diplomatic note of Nov. 16 seeking custody of the four Marines.

When the embassy finally replied on Monday, it invoked the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, which allows the US government

IT'S OFFICIAL/ A6

REM ZAMORA

GO AWAY: The mood at the US Embassy toward the media after it finally and formally made its position known after 2 months of silence.

REUTERS

BOUNTY. A hooded Filipino who informed on an Abu Sayyaf leader gets a P5-million reward from US official William Lam in Zamboanga yesterday.

AP

A FILIPINO soldier welcomes 1st US Special Forces members at the start of joint military exercises yesterday. *(See story on Page A2.)*

House adopting ConCom proposals

By Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio

IT APPEARS TO HAVE ALL THE hallmarks of a creeping constitutional amendment process.

The Charter change show reopened in earnest in the House of Representatives yesterday, featuring a script that seems to hew essentially to the one provided by President Macapagal-Arroyo's handpicked Consultative Commission. It allows her to complete her term until 2010 and to scrap the 2007 elections.

Even the Senate will have its own show today. But Sen. Joker Arroyo admits it is just that—*"pakitang tao lang 'yan* (all for show)." There's overwhelming sentiment in the Senate against amending the Constitution.

Still, the Senate committee on constitutional amendments will open a hearing on proposed modes of introducing Charter change—by transforming the two chambers of Congress into a constituent assembly or calling a constitutional convention.

"I don't feel any pressure to do anything," said Sen. Richard Gordon, committee chair, referring to the Malacañang timeline to have

HOUSE/ A6

Payback time: Fil-Am doctors return home

By Leila B. Salaverria

WHILE HUNDREDS OF DOCtors are leaving the Philippines as nurses, a group of Filipino-American physicians is returning to give something back to their former countrymen.

Physicians for Peace (PFP), a United States-based nonprofit organization, is mounting medical missions in the country.

Dr. Teodoro Herbosa, chair of the PFP's Philippine chapter, called the medical missions "return migration."

"What we intend to do is to become a vehicle for return migration. We also want it to be an avenue for foreign doctors to come here and see how beautiful the Philippines is," Herbosa said.

He was seconded by Dr. Juan Montero, a Filipino-born US citizen who has been coming back regularly to the Philippines the last few years

PAYBACK/ A8

RP nurses to infuse young blood into Hawaii health care system

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

VIGAN CITY—THE INFLUX OF Ilocano nurses in Hawaii, propelled by the agreement signed last week by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle, is expected to inject young blood into the state's nursing system.

Nurses in Hawaii are graying, with their average age rising to 48.7 years in 2000 from 45 in 1997.

Hawaii officials said they retire some 400 nurses a year, but only 300 students graduate from the state's nursing schools.

As it is, Hawaii is among the states with the lowest number of registered nurses per capita in the United States. The annual nursing shortage in Hawaii is estimated to reach more than 4,500 by 2020.

To help address the shortage, Singson and Lingle signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the University of Northern Philippines (UNP) and the University of Hawaii's Kapiolani Community College (KCC).

RP NURSES/ A8

4 Magdalo officers escape from Bonifacio

By Luige del Puerto

FOUR MEMBERS OF THE MAGDALO REBEL group of junior officers and soldiers escaped from their detention cell at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City last night, according to a military intelligence officer who declined to be identified because he was not authorized to speak.

No other information on the escape was immediately available and official sources could not be reached for confirmation.

The source identified those who were reported to have escaped at around 9 p.m. as Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza, 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan, 1st Lt. Patricio Bumidang and 1st Lt. Sonny Sarmiento.

The source said the soldiers piled some chairs on top of each other at the Intelligence Security Group Detention Center at Fort Bonifacio to scale a wall and escape.

He said the electricity in areas surrounding the military camp suddenly went out.

"I am not sure if the brownout had something to do with the escape. But it looks suspicious because there was electricity in the C5 area," he said, referring to the highway that runs along one side of the fort.

Lt. Gen. Samuel Bagasin, Armed Forces of the Philippines deputy chief of staff, said in a phone interview: *"Wala pa akong* report *niyan. Wala akong natatanggap na* report *na ganoon* (I have not received a report on that)."

The INQUIRER tried to reach Army spokesperson Maj. Jay Bartolome Bacarro, Army chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon and AFP spokesperson Col. Tristan Kison but they did not pick up their phones. *With a report from Jo Uy*

Inquirer goes to 63rd Golden Globe Awards

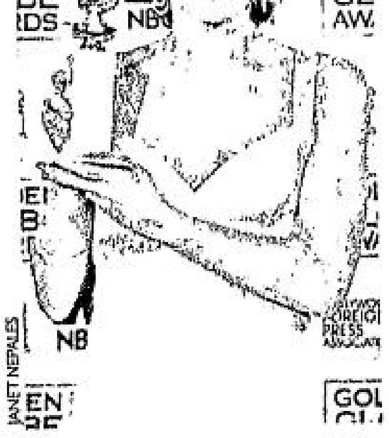
By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—AS "BROKEBACK Mountain," a gay-themed cowboy drama, rode away with the top awards at the 63rd Golden Globe Awards held Monday evening (Tuesday morning, Manila time), the INQUIRER was right there as this correspondent is the first Filipino voting member of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

The INQUIRER had a spot on the red carpet between Daily Variety and the Hollywood Reporter, tinseltown's bibles.

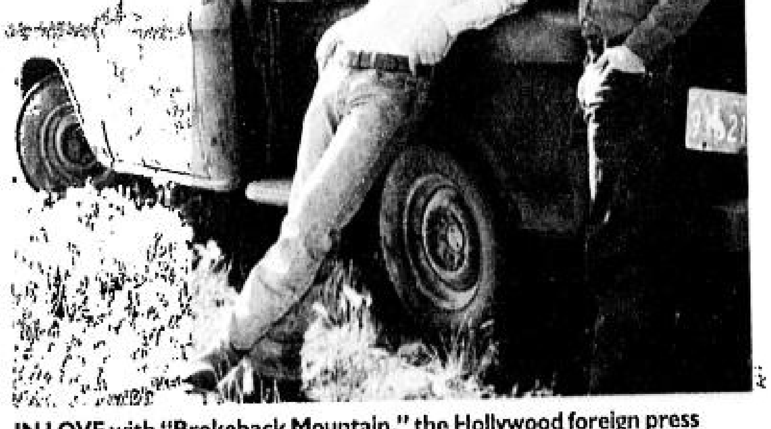
Taiwanese Ang Lee directed the movie, an adaptation of a short story by American novelist E. Annie Proulx. It won four statuettes: Best Film (Drama), Best Director (Lee), Best Screenplay

INQUIRER/ A8



JANET NEPALES

PORTRAIT OF CONTENTMENT. Not so "desperate" Felicity Huffman



IN LOVE with "Brokeback Mountain," the Hollywood foreign press gives its Golden Globe Best Picture award to the cowboy romance.

Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY JAMIE ALARCON, PDI RESEARCH/01/18/06

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

'Brat pack' moves into Malacañang

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE USUALLY STODGY OFfice of the President has become hip with the arrival of Secretary Michael Defensor at Malacañang.

On his first day as Presidential Chief of Staff, Defensor brought along a Playstation Portable (PSP), the current rage among young video game enthusiasts, and scheduled a television interview with two of the participants in the recently concluded Pinoy Big Brother television reality show.

The youngest Cabinet secretary broke into a sheepish grin when reporters pointed out the PSP tucked in his black briefcase while he was going over confidential files he had received at yesterday morning's Cabinet meeting.

Defensor, in a gray pinstriped suit accentuated by a pink tie, said he used the sleek handheld game console to take a break from the drudgery of his office, like the paperwork and long-winded meetings.

At noon, Defensor met with Pinoy Big Brother instant celebrities Say Alonso and Chix Alcala who were doing a segment for a comedy news show.

Red-faced Mike

The former environment secretary was red-faced at the end of the interview when Alonso and Alcala turned him into a housemate sandwich.

"I was surprised by the group hug," said Defensor, who could not tell which was Alonso or Alcala. "I just know they're from Pinoy Big Brother and they're both pretty."

Defensor described his current status as a "floating secretary" since he had not been formally sworn in and an officer in charge had already taken over his post at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

DEFENSOR

He said he left the DENR because the job demanded a full-time boss.

"I felt that if I continued what I am doing now (troubleshooting for Ms Arroyo) I'd be doing the DENR a disservice," Defensor said.

Succeeding Bobi

Defensor takes over from Rigoberto Tiglao who was appointed ambassador to Greece. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita is reportedly set to issue an executive order defining an expanded role in Defensor's new job.

On talk that a "brat pack" was taking over at Malacañang, Defensor said he was not sure what the rumor mongers meant.

"If they're talking about the Brat Pack of Hollywood which includes Frank Sinatra, I'm sure I don't want to be Sammy Davis," he said.

Actually, the Brat Pack was composed of the likes of Rob Lowe, Ally Sheedy, Emilio Estevez and Demi Moore, and was a couple of generations younger than the Rat Pack which was made up of Sinatra, Davis, Dean Martin and Shirley Maclaine, among other American celebrities.

Despite Cory snub, Council of State is on

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS PUSHING AHEAD WITH plans to convene the Council of State on Jan. 24, despite a snub from former President Cory Aquino and other key opposition figures.

The high-level meeting was proposed by former President Fidel Ramos and is envisioned to bring together Ms Arroyo, the two former Presidents and other top political leaders amid a crisis of legitimacy besetting the leadership.

But Aquino, who has broken with Ms Arroyo and demanded she step down amid allegations of election cheating, has said she would not attend because Ms Arroyo's presidency remained "under a cloud of doubt."

Opposition leaders in both houses of Congress have also refused to attend.

Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal also said he was not attending the meeting because he does not want to be identified with "just one side" after the opposition and Mrs. Aquino decided to boycott the meeting, according to the Cebu archdiocesan media liaison officer Msgr. Achilles Dakay.

"The meeting will push through because no one or no group can dictate on an official function such as this and that's why we are preparing for it well," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said in a GMA 7 radio interview.

If those like Aquino did not wish to attend, that was their right, he said.

Ermita said Aquino and other opposition leaders should not take personally their political differences with the President.

Rising above politics

"In our brand of politics, when we are on opposite sides, it doesn't mean that we have to take this fight personally,' he said.

Incoming Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor appealed to the opposition to rise above personal politics and deal with political issues in a statesman-like manner.

"They are former Presidents and they can bring out their position here (Council of State). We should rise above personalities and achieve a high level of statesmanship," he said.

He said the views expressed by Aquino and other opposition leaders were "personal" and that the Council of State would have been a perfect venue for them to state their position.

Defensor said there would be no specific agenda at the meeting. It would not aim at reaching a consensus so participants could say anything they want on any issue affecting the country.

Missed opportunity

Aquino just missed out on a chance to tell President Arroyo point-blank to step down from her post, he said.

He said the absence of opposition leaders would not be significant as Ramos and the leaders of various institutions would be attending.

"It doesn't mean that the Council of State would be ineffective or that it should no longer be convened," Defensor told reporters.

Presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said it was "sad" that Aquino was not attending but said the meeting would still be important as there were still important issues to be discussed, especially with regard to the economy.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the meeting was "not about personalities, but about the collective effort of national leaders committed to national transformation and renewal."

"President Arroyo welcomes those who will come, and respects the decision of those who have chosen not to," Bunye said. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christine Avendaño*

Prosecutors ask court to resolve Erap plunder case

By Nelson F. Flores

STATE PROSECUTORS YESTERDAY ASKED the Sandiganbayan Special Division to end the plunder trial of deposed President Estrada and consider the case submitted for resolution.

The move came a day after Estrada's lawyers failed to present any defense witnesses.

In a 26-page comment, the prosecution said that even if the trial were to be terminated now, Estrada and his lawyers could no longer validly claim denial of due process as they had been given almost three years to prepare and present their case since the last government witness was presented in April 2003.

The state prosecutors said the defense lawyers were simply letting the proceedings drag on. They said the defense had been given enough opportunity to present its side.

"Due process has been very well kept and preserved," they said.

Defense lawyer Rene Saguisag recently informed the court that the defense had only two witnesses more to present, including Estrada.

Last 2 witnesses

But in an "urgent manifestation" last Jan. 11, Saguisag said the defense may still call several other witnesses that the court had earlier subpoenaed, mostly to testify on the alleged selective prosecution and illegal ouster of Estrada.

But the prosecution asked the antigraft court to limit the defense to the last two witnesses that Saguisag had committed to present.

It argued that the defense claim of Estrada's allegedly illegal ouster and premature loss of immunity were no longer tenable. It said the subpoenas issued to the people who would supposedly testify on these issues should now be quashed.

The prosecutors noted that aside from the Supreme Court rulings in *Estrada vs Desierto* and *Estrada vs Macapagal-Arroyo* which both upheld Ms Arroyo's accession in January 2001, the two chanbers of Congress also passed separate resolutions recognizing the legitimacy of the Arroyo government.

Protest greets US troops in South

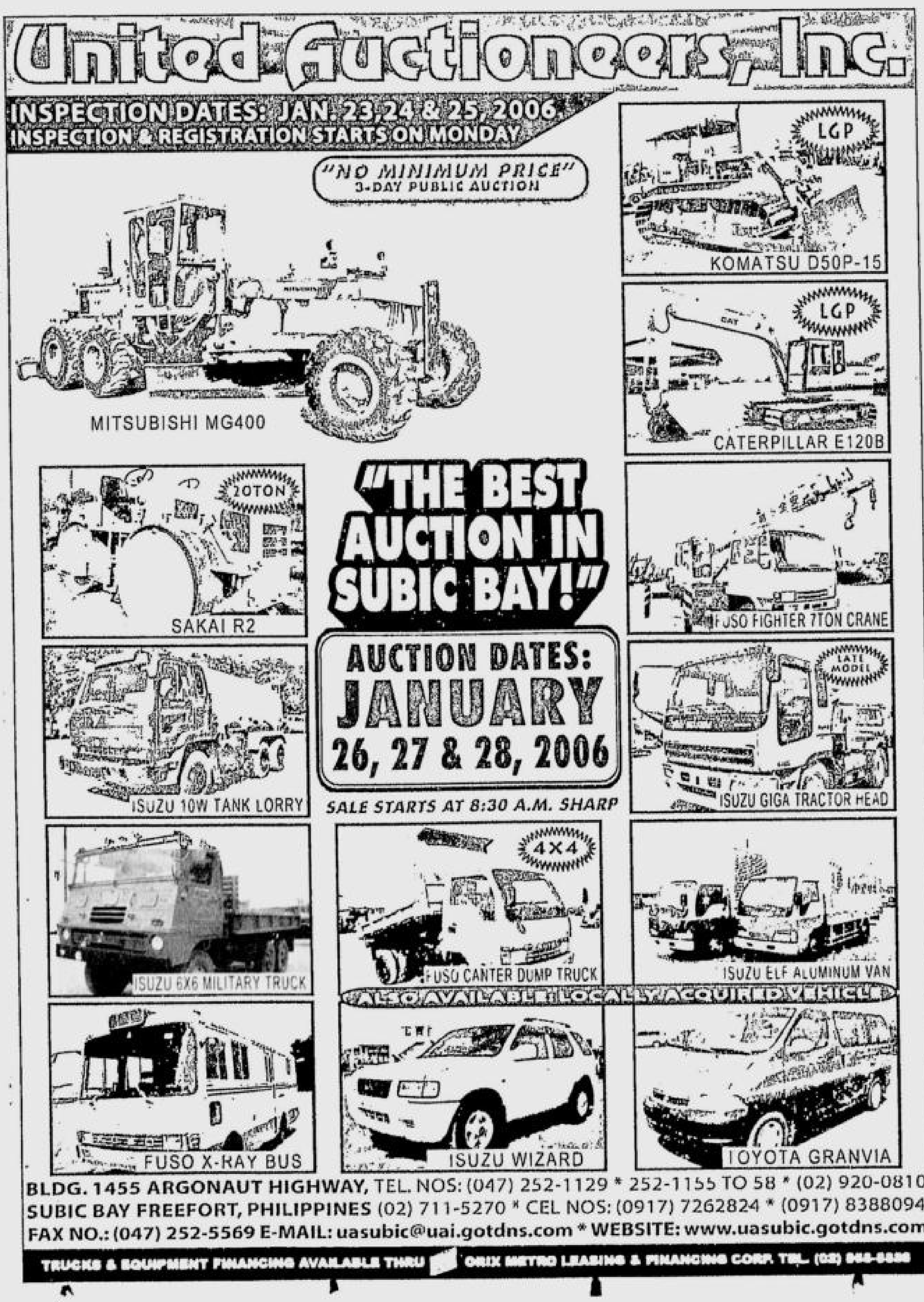
ABOUT 300 AMERICAN AND FILIPINO SOLdiers began their annual war games in Mindanao on Tuesday, part of counterterrorism training that has helped Filipino troops hone their skills in the fight against al-Qaida-linked militants.

Military officials said about 30 American and 250 Filipino soldiers are taking part in small unit tactics, rifle markmanship, combat lifesaver training and field training exercises within the army's Camp Lucero in Carmen town, North Cotabato.

Outside the camp, anti-riot police backed by soldiers and a fire truck blocked a 35-vehicle convoy of about 5,000 protesters demanding that US troops leave Muslim areas in Mindanao.

"We don't want US troops on Muslim soil," said Zaynab Ampatuan, one of the protest organizers.

"These training activities were designed to enhance skills and capabilities of Filipino soldiers," Col. Ruperto Pabustan, a brigade commander, told a news conference. *AP, Reuters*



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AFP beefs up security in wake of rebel attacks

THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES vowed yesterday to step-up security around government installations and other potential targets after a spate of deadly communist rebel attacks.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga met his top commanders to assess the security threat posed by the 37-year-old New People's Army whose attacks have killed at least four soldiers in recent days.

He told reporters after the meeting that military units must improve their intelligence to stem attacks on soft targets such as "poorly-defended police stations" and soldiers "travelling alone or in groups of two."

He said the recent NPA attacks had prompted the military to review security precautions at government and military buildings because they were "causing terror for the people and disrupting their livelihoods."

NPA rebels killed four soldiers and wounded eight others in an ambush in Samar last Sunday. They also attacked a jail in Batangas City on Saturday and freed nine NPA members and four other inmates.

Biggest threat

Senga described the NPA as one of the biggest security threats in the country although the Muslim extremist group Abu Sayyaf posed more danger in the south. He warned that even "a small terrorist attack in a tourist resort" would have a significant impact on the country's economy and further destabilize peace and security.

"We have been successful in preventing terror attacks but it doesn't mean there will be no more (attacks.) That is why our thrust is for intensified intelligence collection efforts in cooperation with Philippine National Police and other government agencies," Senga said.

Another reason for the military to do better work at intelligence-gathering were the recent incursions of a fugitive Marine captain into military and police camps.

Military intelligence units have failed to locate Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, one of the alleged leaders of Oakwood mutiny, who escaped from military custody last Dec. 14.

'Anything's possible'

In recent weeks, Faeldon has shown video clips and still pictures of himself inside the AFP Western Command and Southern Command headquarters in Palawan and Zamboanga City, respectively, and most recently, in the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame. *AFP with a report from Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

Solons want PNCC permit voided

EIGHT CONGRESSMEN FILED A RESOLUTION in the House yesterday urging the revocation of the Philippine National Construction Company's permit to operate the North and South Luzon expressways due to "unsatisfactory performance and noncompliance" with the terms of its franchise.

In House Resolution No. 1055, the lawmakers said the PNCC had failed to pay the annual concession fee of P1 billion and now, owed P2 billion to the Toll Regulatory Board.

The resolution was signed by Representatives Arthur F. Celeste, Amado T. Espino Jr., Generoso Tulagan, Mark O. Cojuangco and Conrado M. Estrella, all of Pangasinan; Hermilando I. Mandanas of Batangas, Wilhelmino M. Sy-Alvarado of Bulacan and Rodolfo T. Albano III of Isabela.

The eight said the PNCC had also failed to comply with the agreement to extend the North Luzon Expressway to Carmen, Pangasinan, from Sta. Ines, Pampanga, and the South Luzon Expressway to Lucena City from Calamba, Laguna.

To top it all, they said, the PNCC entered into joint venture agreements with other firms through a Supplemental Toll Operation Agreement, which in effect provided for the extension of the PNCC franchise beyond its expiration date of April 30, 2007.

They said the extension "is considered a usurpation of the legislative power to grant franchises," and "officials who refuse to heed this are civilly and criminally liable for the damages caused."

The legislators said the agreements, if not properly addressed, would result "in a mockery of Congress and the executive branch of the government."

They also urged the removal from the franchise agreement of the PNCC's right to rehabilitate the Alabang-Sto. Tomas-Calamba portion of the South Luzon Expressway due to the company's continued failure to repair the segment within the agreed upon period. *Michael Lim Ubac*

Pimentel asks PAL to rethink decision to stop flying to Riyadh

SAYING IT WAS A "BIG LETdown" to Overseas Filipino Workers in Saudi Arabia, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday asked the Philippine Airlines to reconsider its decision to discontinue flights to the oil-rich kingdom starting March 2.

Pimentel said PAL's decision to stop its Manila-Riyadh flights was difficult to understand since around one million OFWs were employed in Saudi Arabia and "make up a captive market" for the airline.

PAL president Jaime Bautista announced last week that the three-times a week flights to Riyadh have not been profitable for the past several years due to stiff competition from at least six airlines from various Arab Gulf states.

"We were trying to maintain Riyadh to give our OFWs the seats but since the Middle Eastern carriers have been serving the route well, then we can suspend operations," Bautista said.

Six Middle Eastern national carriers already operate a total of 43 flights weekly between Manila, Cebu and nine points in the region. In addition, five East Asian carriers serve the Gulf market from the Philippines with 33 flights weekly via their hubs.

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Ex-agri chief takes over Aussie mining firm

By Christine A. Gaylican

A GROUP OF BUSINESSMEN led by former Agriculture Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez is taking over management of an Australian company's mining operations in Albay which the government had partially suspended after two mining spills last year, and is promising to install better systems and controls to ensure environmental safety.

Announcements issued here and in Sydney yesterday said that Dominguez and other unidentified investors had bought into the Australian company Lafayette Mining Limited Australia and would manage the operations of Lafayette Philippines. Dominguez will head the local firm as chairman, president and chief executive officer, the announcement said.

The announcement came one week after the Pollution Adjudication Board ruled that Rapu-Rapu Processing Inc., owned by Lafayette, had violated the Clean Water Act when it discharged waste water with a high cyanide content into creeks on Albay's Rapu-Rapu island last October. It fined the company P10.4 million.

"We will not resume operations of the Rapu Rapu polymetallic processing plant unless we are absolutely sure that the project is operated in a responsible and environmentally sustainable manner," Dominguez said. "Mining is a partnership for the benefit of all parties: the surrounding communities, the government and the economy, and the company itself."

Dominguez said his priorities were to find the causes of the spills and introduce measures to prevent their recurrence and ensure full compliance with environmental laws.

He said he planned to install an on-line monitoring system to allow interested parties to check on the plant's operations any time of the day through the internet.

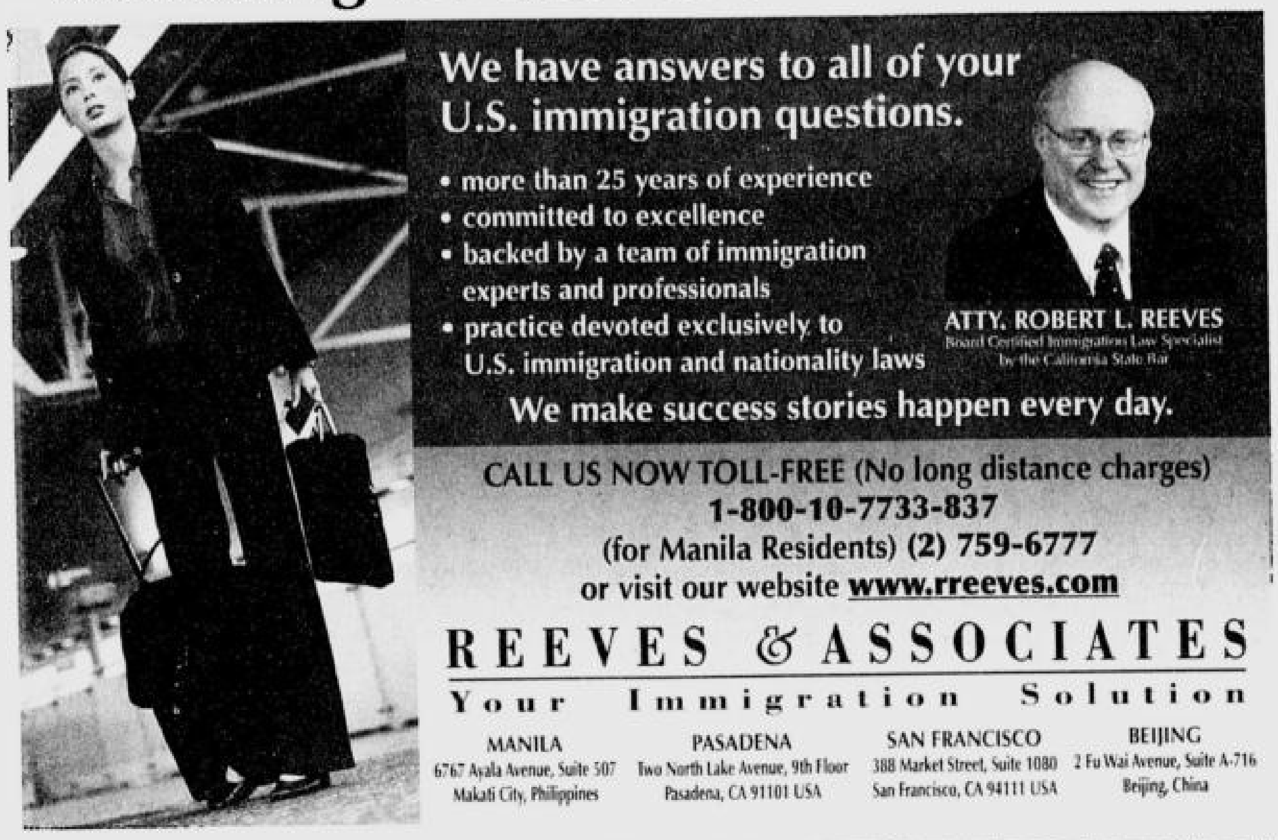
Lafayette's mineral production area in Rapu Rapu will soon go into base metal production next month after the rehabilitation of its mining waste treatment devices. The Rapu Rapu polymetallic mining project is expected to produce copper, gold, silver and zinc valued at $350 million in the first six years of operation.

Dominguez said a monitoring group would be formed immediately to include representatives from the community, the Church, and other sectors to check the project's compliance with environmental laws.

Lafayette's announcement in Sydney said Dominguez's group was to acquire 10 million shares, equivalent to a 1.6 percent stake, in Lafayette Mining Limited Australia for Aust. $1 million (roughly P39.62 million).

As part of the arrangement, Dominguez would join the four-member board of the parent company and manage its Philippine operations.

Dominguez was secretary of agriculture and natural resources during the Aquino administration. He is the father of the Bantay Dagat program and led the campaign against the destructive "muro ami" fishing method.



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Jocjoc asks SC to void Senate arrest warrant

By Armand N. Nocum

FORMER AGRICULTURE UNDERSECRETARY Jocelyn "Jocjoc" Bolante yesterday asked the Supreme Court to stop the Senate from implementing the arrest warrant issued against him for ignoring its summons for him to attend committee hearings on the alleged anomalies in the release of the multi-million fertilizer fund.

In a 29-page petition which he submitted through the Philippine consul in Chicago, Bolante claimed that his Constitutional rights have been violated and that the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee had acted in "excess" of discretion.

Bolante said he was willing to attend the panel hearings scheduled on Jan. 23 to Feb. 3, this year.

"The bottomline is clear, the Constitution clearly and expressly states that only judges may issue warrants or arrest and the Senate or any of its committee has no power, implied or otherwise, to issue the same," said Bolante, who received the arrest warrant on Dec. 15, 2005.

"Any exercise or threatened exercise of the purported power of the Senate to issue orders or arrest pursuant to section 21, article VI of the Constitution is unconstitutional and invalid," he added.

Bolante stressed that Section 21, Article VI of the Constitution states : "The Senate or the House of representatives or any of its respective committees may conduct inquiries in aid of legislation in accordance with its duly published rules of procedure. The rights of persons appearing in or affected by such inquiries shall be respected."

Named respondents in the petition were officials of the Senate Committee on Accountability of Public Officers and Investigations; and the Committee on Agriculture and Food; and as well as Maj. Jose Balajadia, Senate sergeant-at- arms.

The petition stemmed from a Dec. 12, 2005 hearing of the Senate panels where Bolante was cited in contempt and was ordered arrested for failing to attend four hearings of the committees last year.

World Heritage sites lecture

ARCHITECT AUGUSTO VILLALON will give a talk on World Heritage Sites in the Philippines on Saturday at 10 a.m. at the National Museum.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) inscribes natural and cultural sites that exhibit universal value in the prestigious World Heritage List which now numbers almost 1,000. Sites include the Galapagos islands, the Great Barrier Reef, the Great Wall of China, and the city of Venice.

The Philippines has five inscribed sites whose significance is nationally known but not generally appreciated. Villalon's talk will introduce the international and national value of the five Philippine sites.

It will be the first lecture for the new year in the Museum Foundation of the Philippines' series "Stories About Preserving Cultural Heritage" held every second Saturday of the month at the museum's Tambunting Villonco Hall.

On Feb. 11, educator and curator Ma. Victoria T. Herrera will talk on the state of public sculpture.

Aside from his architecture practice, Villalon is involved with the Heritage Conservation Society, the Unesco, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, among other organizations.

For information, call Elvie Magpayo or Dindin Araneta at 404-2685, e-mail info@museumfoundationphils.com, or log on to www.museumfoundationphils.com.

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 2 ISSUE, a Lifestyle article on Page C1—"The best and the worst of Philippine art in 2005"—misstated the place where the exhibit of young artist Leonardo Aguinaldo was held. The exhibit was held at the Galeria Duemila—not the Hiraya Gallery.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a Lifestyle article—"Notable books of 2005"—misstated on Page D3 the name of the Jesuit missionary who wrote the 17th century manuscript, "History of the Bisayan People, Vol. III" (UST Publishing House). The manuscript was written by Fr. Ignacio Francisco Alcina—not Fr. Pedro Chirino.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 3 ISSUE, a front-page story—"For 14th year, Joker is Congress 'Kuripot King'"—misstated the amount that Senators Rodolfo Biazon, Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. had spent in taxpayers' money for foreign travel in 2004. Biazon spent P382,401 for foreign travel—not P382.4 million; Santiago spent P388,342.40— not P388.3 million, and Revilla spent P76,146.75—not P76 million.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, January 18, 2006
2nd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: **1 S 17:32-33, 37, 40-51**
Gospel: **Mark 3:1-6**

Again Jesus entered the synagogue. A man who had a paralyzed hand was there and some people watched Jesus: Would he heal the man on the Sabbath? If he did they could accuse him.

Jesus said to the man with the paralyzed hand, "Stand here in the center." Then he asked them, "What does the Law allow us to do on the Sabbath? To do good or to do harm? To save life or to kill?" But they were silent.

Then Jesus looked around at them with anger and deep sadness because they had closed their minds. And he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out and his hand was healed. But as soon as the Pharisees left, they met with Herod's supporters, looking for a way to destroy Jesus.

Commentary

The Lord has been with David and he goes to kill Goliath with his slingshot. He has protected his sheep from wolves, bandits and is protector and defender of the weak. He proclaims aloud to all that there is a God in Israel and that it is not by the sword or the spear that God saves. And Goliath goes down with one shot. Jesus too stands before his enemies who are resistant to his Word in the synagogue and commands a man with a shriveled hand to stand up in front with him. He does battle with the Word of his mouth, heals the man and cries out that he is about life and saving those in pain. And like Goliath, they remain silent, closed against him.

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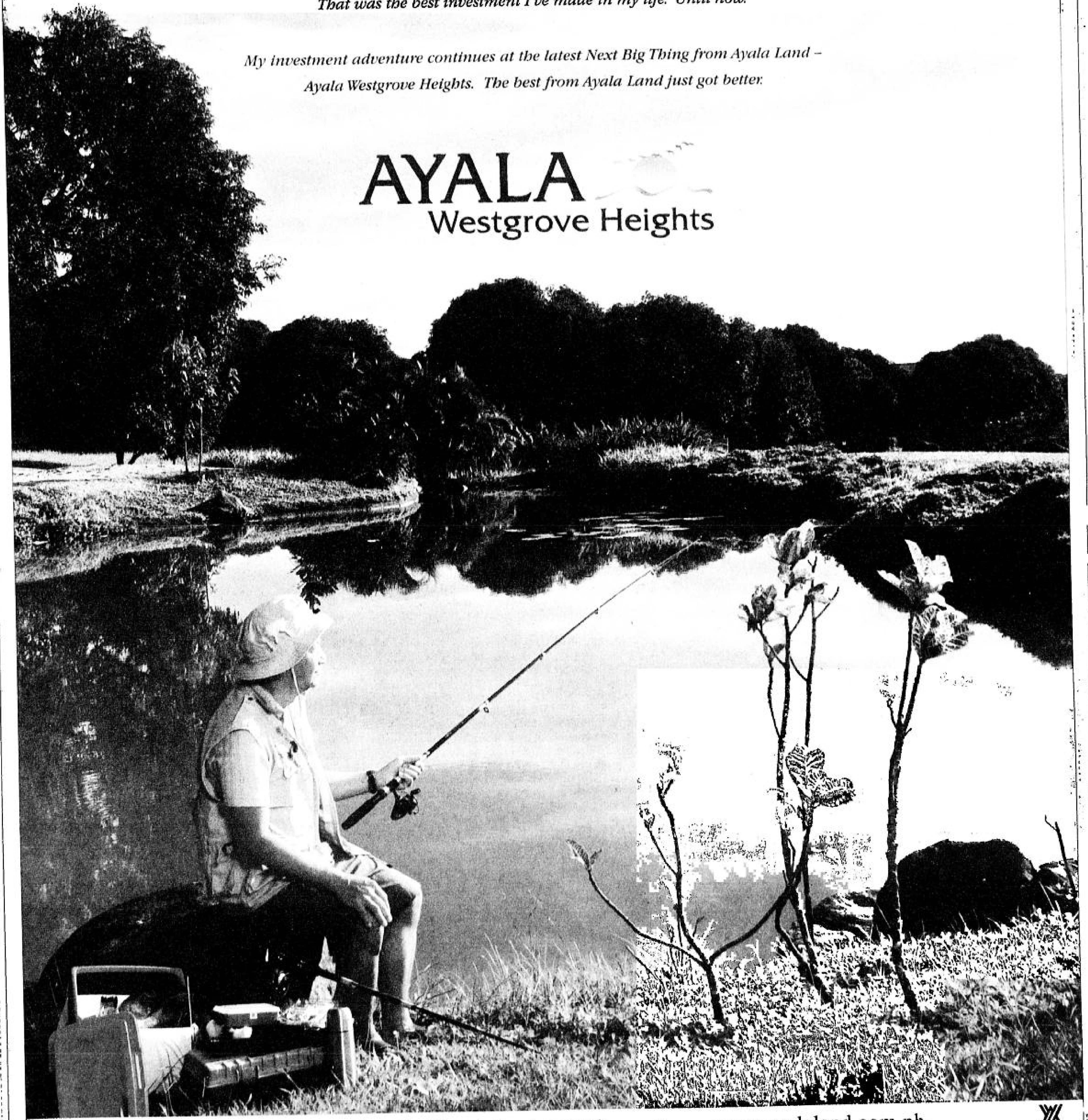

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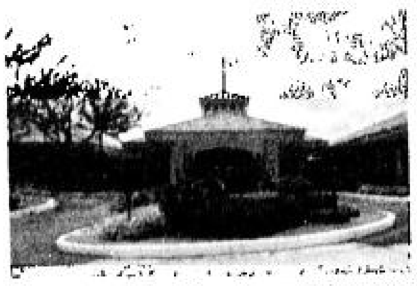

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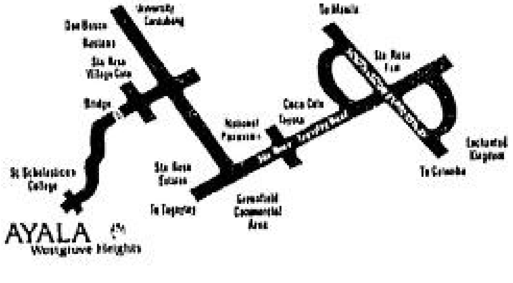


Terminate VFA, Miriam urges Congress

By Philip Tubeza

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO YESterday called for the termination of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement.

Santiago, chair of the Senate foreign relations committee and cochair of the Legislative Oversight Committee on the VFA (Lovfa), said the US Embassy's refusal to turn over the four Americans charged with rape to Philippine authorities left Congress with "no choice" but to terminate the VFA and renegotiate a new treaty.

But Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and Sen. Joker Arroyo took a diplomatic tack, saying the Department of Foreign Affairs should press the US Embassy to change its position or arrive at "a favorable and just compromise" with the US government.

Arroyo said the VFA should eventually be revised to correct provisions disadvantageous to the Philippines.

Santiago said: "We cannot let our people down. The expectations [were] very high that the US [would surrender the accused]. We are equal states. And this is not the way to treat a co-equal or even a valued ally."

She said the Lovfa would meet on Friday to formulate the resolution calling for a renegotiation, which could be approved by the Senate and the House as early as next week.

The resolution will then be submitted to President Macapagal-Arroyo for her to decide whether to implement it, Santiago said.

If the President approves it, the country will have to wait for six months before the VFA "automatically terminates," she said, adding:

"This will all now depend on whether President Arroyo will respect the sense of the Philippine Congress."

But Senator Arroyo said: "I think we should first explore the possibility of the two countries agreeing. It's too early [to terminate the VFA]. This is diplomacy, and diplomacy means that we first talk.

"We can't go on this way. It is to the United States' interests that they relent on this..."

Arroyo also said the President might not be up to standing up to the Americans.

"The Philippine position will depend on the will of the government to assert its position, and I have doubts whether it will. You know, President Arroyo is so weak that she'll be under pressure from the Americans not to press this too much," he said.

Pangilinan said Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo should summon US Embassy officials and impress on them that the Philippines should have custody.

It's official: US says no

From page A1

to keep custody of its soldiers for the duration of their trial.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, which had been negotiating with US diplomats on the custody issue, disclosed the embassy's reply yesterday. The DFA said it would await advice from the Department of Justice on its next move.

"In the reply note verbale [No. 0060] of Jan. 16, the US Embassy stated that 'having taken full account of the position of the government of the Philippines regarding custody, the US government shall continue to exercise custody until completion of all judicial proceedings, as provided for by Article 5, Section 6, of the VFA,'" the DFA said in a statement.

'Extraordinary case'

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo had earlier said the Philippines should have "actual physical custody" of the accused because theirs was an "extraordinary case" wherein the Philippine government could take hold of them as provided for in the VFA.

But the 1998 treaty merely states that the US government "shall take into full account" such a Philippine position, and apparently requires no other specific action from the Americans.

It is another document—the 1999 Senate Resolution No. 18—which spells out in clearer terms the Philippine prerogative with regard to "extraordinary cases."

The resolution maintains that the Philippines has "the right to reject a US request for waiver of the Philippine primary jurisdiction in cases of particular importance [to the host state]," such as heinous crimes and violations of the Dangerous Drugs Act and of the Anti-Child Abuse Law.

Romulo was still in Washington yesterday for engagements that, the DFA had insisted, were not related to the Subic rape case.

Not a setback

According to Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, the matter is now in Dilag's court.

"We'll see what's the reaction of the judge," Zuño said in a phone interview.

In a Jan. 16 memo faxed to Dilag—which the judge said he received yesterday—Zuño said the arrest warrant was "not served" for "the reason stated on the note verbale" from the US Embassy.

The US Embassy took custody of the accused soldiers—six in all, but two were later cleared—shortly after the alleged rape. It invoked Article 5 of the VFA, which allows US authorities to hold the accused until the end of the judicial proceedings.

The Philippines' request for custody cited the same Article 5, which also provides that "confinement or detention by Philippine authorities of US military personnel shall be carried out in facilities agreed on by appropriate Philippine and [US] authorities."

The US Embassy responded to the Nov. 16 request for custody three days after Dilag issued an arrest warrant for the four accused, or on Jan. 13.

But Olongapo Prosecutor Prudencio Jalandoni appeared unfazed by the embassy's reply.

Interviewed yesterday at the DOJ office in Manila, Jalandoni said that as far as they were concerned, "the development is not a setback for the prosecution."

Jalandoni said his office would focus on speeding up the arraignment of the four Marines as soon as the petition for review filed by the Filipino lawyers of Carpentier, Silkwood and Duplantis was resolved.

He also said it was in the interest of the defense lawyers to have the case resolved as soon as possible.

Dilag said the case could drag if the DOJ gave due course to the petition for review. A review takes 60 days.

Taking offense

Jalandoni said he had learned that US Embassy officials "felt offended" that an arrest warrant was issued despite ongoing diplomatic negotiations on the custody issue.

But Corporal Smith's lawyer, Benjamin Formoso, as well as other defense lawyers Francisco Rodrigo and John Coluso, said they were not aware of the note verbale.

Formoso had filed a motion to reconsider a judicial determination of probable cause in the charge.

Jalandoni, for his part, is seeking a reconsideration of the dropping of the charge against the Filipino driver of the accused, Timoteo Soriano Jr.

The accused are "restricted" to a one-story, air-conditioned building with bedrooms, a kitchen, and dining and living areas at the back of the US Embassy compound facing Manila Bay, according to Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the VFA.

In a text message from Zamboanga City, the mother of the 22-year-old complainant said the family was saddened to learn that the US Embassy had refused to relinquish custody of the four Marines.

"We hope the government will take serious action to serve the warrant of arrest," the mother said. "We are continuously hoping that this case will be resolved and won by the Filipino people."

Mission accomplished

LAWYERS FROM THE CHILD Justice League (CJL) led by Katrina Legarda will stop providing legal services to the complainant because their work is done.

Acting Social Welfare Secretary Lualhati Pablo made the announcement yesterday after talking to members of the CJL, a nonstock, nonprofit group chaired by Legarda.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development had earlier entered into an agreement with the CJL to provide legal services to abused children.

Shortly after learning of the Subic case last year, Legarda offered her services to the complainant for free. The DSWD also invoked the agreement with Legarda after the complainant's parents sought help in filing the case.

Pablo told the INQUIRER that the agreement with Legarda and the CJL was "only until the filing of the charges" against the US Marines.

"It was very important that the case be filed. Attorney Legarda has completed what she agreed to do," Pablo said.

Promise fulfilled

According to Pablo, the complainant and her family were "upset" by the development but must now decide whether they would look for other lawyers or convince Legarda to continue to help them.

Legarda's colleague, Minerva Ambrosio, said her services and that of the other lawyers was limited to the preliminary investigation stage.

"We have fulfilled our promise to see to it that a charge was filed against the servicemen," Ambrosio said when reached on her mobile phone yesterday. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

House adopting ConCom proposals

From page A1

the parliamentary system in place by June.

But in the lower chamber, it was all business.

Moving swiftly, the House committee on constitutional amendments adopted by a vote of 29-10 a working draft of proposed changes to the Charter to shift the country from the presidential to the parliamentary system.

President GMA also PM

The 36-page draft contains seven "amendments" that substantially overhaul the 1987 Constitution promulgated under the administration of Corazon Aquino.

The seven proposed changes include adopting the parliamentary system, an option for the scrapping of the scheduled elections next year and extending the terms of office of elective officials to 2010, establishment of a unicameral legislature and the abolition of the Senate, and lifting restrictions on foreign investments.

Draft an updated version

The draft also contains a proposal for the 58-year-old Ms Arroyo to remain in office until her current term ends in 2010, serving both as President and prime minister.

The amendments were basically taken from the ConCom's draft Constitution sent to Congress last December and approved during Saturday's caucus of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats. But because the ConCom report was not properly transmitted to Congress, administration allies said the ConCom draft would serve simply as a reference.

Ms Arroyo created the ConCom in August in the midst of impeachment proceedings against her in the House. In September, her allies junked the impeachment complaint that stemmed from disclosures in the Virgilio Garcillano wiretaps suggesting she rigged the 2004 presidential election.

Rep. Constantino Jaraula of Cagayan de Oro, committee chair, said the draft was an updated version of the proposed amendments adopted by the panel last December.

Parañaque Rep. Eduardo Zialcita said the committee's report to the House committee on rules last December would likely be pulled out to be properly updated with the provisions in the working draft adopted yesterday.

Mysterious redrafting

"That's an old draft. You have to understand that we've been discussing this already for two years," said Zialcita. "That draft still does not contain the provisions that we in the party, Lakas, came up with. (These) have to be incorporated in the working draft."

Article 18, containing the transitory provisions in the working draft, proposes that incumbent lawmakers be automatic members of the interim parliament until June 30, 2007.

"However, if in the plebiscite for the ratification of the foregoing proposed amendments, the people shall decide to set the first elections under the parliamentary system to the second Monday of May 2010, then the Interim Parliament shall be extended until June 30, 2010," reads Section 3 of the transitory provisions.

"The mysterious redrafting of the proposed constitutional amendments from only 14 pages in December to 36 pages in January shows an unseen, powerful hand intervening in this sacrosanct duty of the House," said Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez.

Golez and other opposition members would not buy the explanation that the changes made to the committee's proposal were the result of mere "styling" as Jaraula said.

Golez said the old draft did not have the no-election scenario, which had been rejected. "Now, it has No-El as an option," Golez said.

ConCom draft only reference

The ConCom's proposed draft was officially junked after Golez and Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. pointed out that it had not been properly referred to the House.

Locsin said the only way it could be tackled would be when individual congressmen proposed specific amendments from the output of the 55-member commission.

Locsin moved that the ConCom proposal be removed from the matrix of proposed provisions given to committee members.

Jaraula obliged and ruled that the ConCom proposal be made a mere reference for congressmen. There were no objections.

Also fueling fears of the creeping effort to push Charter change were the slow deliberations on the P1.05-trillion budget for 2006 at the House.

Budget delay

Noting that the coincidence was too glaring, Senate leaders yesterday raised the possibility that some congressmen were delaying its passage in the hopes of reenacting and using portions of the 2005 budget to buy support for Charter change.

"You cannot help but come to that conclusion," Senate President Franklin Drilon said, stressing that a reenacted budget would give the President leeway "to realign" items of last year's budget.

"I think they're delaying this budget so that more projects could be distributed to push the proposed shift to parliamentary government," said Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., chair of the committee on finance.

"The coincidence between the push for amendments to the Constitution and the delay in the passage of the budget is too hard to ignore," he added.

The senators appeared riled by reports that the House committee on appropriations did not set any hearing on the budget measure this week even as the Senate committee of the whole resumed its budget hearings yesterday.

Siamese twins

"How do you get the votes (for Cha-cha) in the House? Use it (budget) as leverage" administration Senator Arroyo said in a briefing. "The Cha-cha and the budget, they are Siamese twins."

Drilon explained that should the 2005 budget be reenacted, the President has the discretion to realign some items in it, "especially in the capital expenses where the project has already been terminated."

In effect, funds would be reallocated for projects that had been completed last year, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said.

"Projects that are programmed for 2006 cannot be implemented yet, but the available funds can be used for pork barrel projects. In other words, they can use the money to buy the support of members of Congress who want to be bought," he said.

The senators lamented that as things stood, the P13-billion increase in the pay of 1.4 million government employees incorporated in the 2006 budget was already delayed.

Drilon said he wasn't "very optimistic" that the General Appropriations Act would be passed by March 31 in view of the House decision to forego hearings this week. *With reports from Philip C. Tubeza, Christine O. Avendaño and Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Enter new generation of women leaders

PARIS—THAT A NEW GENERATION of women are claiming power on all continents is now evident with the swearing in of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president of Liberia and the weekend victory of Michelle Bachelet in Chile.

Elected women leaders—including such iron-fisted prime ministers as India's Indira Gandhi and Britain's formidable Margaret Thatcher—have played important roles on the world stage for more than a quarter-century.

In Europe and Asia, the Americas and Australia, women of the Left and Right have held office as head of states and governments, but many cut lone figures on a political scene overwhelmingly dominated by men.

The simultaneous arrival of Bachelet, 54, as Chile's first woman leader, and Sirleaf, 67, as Africa's first ever elected woman head of state, suggests that a new trend may be at work.

In Europe, the last few months saw Angela Merkel emerge as Germany's first woman chancellor, while Finland's Tarja Halonen looked set for reelection as president following a strong first-round performance at the weekend.

Women presidents already hold office in Ireland and Latvia, while a woman, Segolene Royal, has emerged as the clear frontrunner to be the opposition Socialist Party's candidate in France's 2007 presidential election.

In Asia, several strong women leaders have emerged in the past five years—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines, Begum Khaleda Zia, elected prime minister of Muslim-majority Bangladesh for a second time in 2001, and Prime Minister Helen Clark, who has governed New Zealand since 1999.

Even Africa, where women were long excluded from political life, currently has two female prime ministers: Maria do Carmo Silveira of Sao Tome et Principe and Luisa Diogo of Mozambique.

In the United States, the prospect of a woman succeeding US President George W. Bush is no longer taboo, with both Democrat Sen. Hillary Clinton and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice seen as strong possible contenders.

US First Lady Laura Bush—who led a high-level delegation to Liberia for Sirleaf's inauguration on Monday—had said she expected to see a woman president of the United States within the next decade.

"I think it will happen for sure," Bush told CNN television on Friday, immediately mentioning Rice when asked to suggest names.

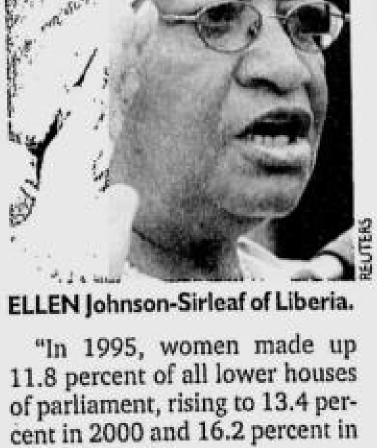
Rice—whose election as a black woman would be a double first for the country—has been repeatedly named in Republican circles as a possible candidate, although she insists she has no White House ambitions.

Beacon of hope

Laura Bush, who was to continue to Ghana and Nigeria on a tour focused on the work of African women, hailed Sirleaf, a Harvard-educated former World Bank official, as a beacon of hope for her sex.

"The centerpiece, really, of this trip is women's empowerment, with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as a shining example for all of us, for women around the world, not just women on her continent," Bush told reporters on her way to Liberia.

Worldwide, the number of women in politics is steadily rising, although they remain severely underrepresented, according to Karine Jabre, a Swiss researcher who has studied the place of women in parliaments since 1945.


REUTERS

ELLEN Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia.

MICHELLE Bachelet of Chile AP

"In 1995, women made up 11.8 percent of all lower houses of parliament, rising to 13.4 percent in 2000 and 16.2 percent in 2005," she said.

Social issues

Despite notable exceptions, such as the tough-minded Thatcher, Jabre's study also suggested that women in positions of power tended to put a greater priority on social issues than their male counterparts.

As Africa's first elected head of state, Sirleaf has argued that women had a central role to play in restoring hope to one of the world's most failed states, ruined by 14 years of civil war.

"The women of Liberia and the women of Africa, we must ... succeed, and we will," she told the hundreds of women who came to support her ahead of her inauguration. *AFP*

LUNG CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES

24th Anniversary

"Ugnayan sa Kalusugan, Kalikasan at Kapaligiran"

1982

24 Years of the Lung Center of the Philippines
EXCELLENCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PULMONARY DISEASES

By: Rey L. Quiason, Jr. & Vangie Aquino-Quiason

The Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP), after being razed to the ground several years ago, has risen from the ashes and has regained its leadership role in the treatment, care, and management of lung ailments, from the common cough to the most severe form of respiratory problems.

The Center is celebrating its 24th anniversary at a time when its services are in greater demand. Blame the rising incidence of lung ailments to the growing pollution of our environment.

Studies show that respiratory diseases have increased, particularly in the urban areas, due largely to air pollution. Emissions of gases and solid particulates from motor vehicles and factories, as well as cigarette smoking, have been cited as having contributed to breathing problems.

It is thus not surprising that the Center has adopted as its anniversary theme *"Ugnayan sa Kalusugan, Kalikasan at Kapaligiran"* to recognize the role of the environment in overall health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that lung diseases, especially tuberculosis (TB) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), are among the world's leading killers. These two diseases are caused by unsanitary surroundings, polluted air, and cigarette smoking.

In the Philippines, TB is reportedly the sixth leading cause of death from disease while in developed countries like the United States, COPD ranks fourth as a leading killer illness.

The Lung Center is not, however, fazed by the enormity of the problem. Dr. Juanito A. Rubio, Executive Director of the Center, says that while the situation has become more complex, efforts to meet lung diseases and breathing problems still remain as its priority.

"Today, the Center is responding more aggressively to the challenges of treating and managing lung diseases," Dr. Rubio said. "Our physicians here continue their quest for excellence in lung and other chest diseases, whatever the situation."

Aiming for Excellence

"At this point in time, we aim to make the LCP the premier Center for lung diseases that will be able to extend its influence all over the Philippines, particularly in the excellence of its services, and the quality and responsiveness of its research and training," Dr. Rubio added.

To attain this dream, the LCP executive director explained that the Center will undertake researches "that will make the treatment of lung diseases better, simpler, more effective and more affordable."

"We will also continue to train people, so that we could be able to place pulmunologists in all corners of the Philippines and in all major hospitals," he said.

The leadership of the Lung Center recognizes the need for a vision to guide the organization to what it would be in the future. That is why it has adopted, in simple straight-forward terms the vision of the Center:

"The premier institution for lung and other chest diseases providing quality healthcare through excellent service, training and research."

The realization of this vision is not far away, judging from the way things are shaping up. There are, however, challenges that should be met head-on.

Within the next five years, the Lung Center of the Philippines expects to be a byword in the treatment of lung and other chest diseases not only in the Philippines but across Asia.

The mission of the Center is listed in four strategic approaches.

First, the LCP shall provide quality healthcare through state-of-the-art facilities by highly competent and compassionate staff for the improvement of quality of life of the Filipino people.

Second, the LCP shall provide immediate attention to every individual in need, regardless of creed, color, sex, socio-economic status and political affiliation.

Dr. Rubio reveals that the Center never intends to sacrifice its intention of putting care for the patients before anything else. Thus, whatever subsidy it could get from the government will be spent to support charity cases.

Third, the LCP shall endeavor to achieve financial stability and long-term sustainability.

In this case, the experience of Dr. Rubio as a professional hospital administrator and manager comes in handy. As a holder of a Master's Degree in Hospital Administration from the Ateneo de Manila University, he has managed to rationalize the operations of the Center in order to raise the needed revenues to sustain its operations.

"We also have to earn and we have to be very innovative with our income generation," the Center's head said. While the government was able to subsidize the Center to the tune of P205 million last year, other sources of funds had to be tapped and the management system of the hospital itself had to be more efficient in its operations.

And fourth, the LCP shall be dedicated to lung health promotion and advocacy.

Today, the Center continues to undertake community-based programs in cooperation with local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations (NGOs) and the civil society. As an example, the LCP operates the Asthma Club, a support group established for asthmatic patients, as well as the Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS) Program for tuberculosis patients.

Patient Care Comes First

The Center offers to patients a wide range of services in lung and other chest ailments. Aside from asthma, tuberculosis, and other pulmonary infections, it also provides services in early lung cancer detection and treatment, and smoke cessation. In order to help patients, the Center provides free chest x-ray every 6 months (up to 75 years of age) and free pulmonary function test.

There is also a unit on obstructive sleep apnea, a dangerous breathing condition wherein a person usually stops breathing while asleep. The unit has a staff of 14 technicians, and two specialists headed by Dr. Virginia S. delos Reyes, who just came back from her recent training at the Stanford University.

The major medical services of the Center are provided by five Departments: Pulmonary Medicine, Thoracic Surgery and Anesthesia, Radiology, Pathology and Laboratory, and the Emergency Room-Outpatient.

The Center also maintains a Public Health and Domiciliary Unit (PHDU) that serves as the public arm of the Outpatient Department. It has its own staff and its activities are focused on preventive and promotional programs among ambulant patients, health workers and the general public. The TB Control Program, for example, is one such program of the unit.

As far as the spacious lobby is concerned, it was refurbished and transformed into an extended art gallery. The paintings donated by established and aspiring painters in the past and installed in the various parts of the building were gathered and displayed in one place at the lobby for greater protection, as well as appreciation by visitors and patients alike.

Sustaining the Center's Operations

Beyond these physical improvements is the significant rise in morale of the Center's employees and the growing number of local and foreign physicians who serve as visiting consultants.

To motivate the employees, incentives have been identified and increased, not necessarily through salary adjustments but additional benefits through the collective bargaining agreement between the employee association and the hospital management. Trainings on entrepreneurial activities among employees have also been encouraged to ensure additional sources of income.

Dr. Rubio stressed that by improving the capabilities of the Center's employees in related concerns, "we do not intend to sacrifice quality healthcare for our patients."

"As a corporate hospital, we really have to earn so that we could operate," he added. Being a government hospital, budgetary support is often not enough to fully finance the Center's operations and expansion. He clarified that the subsidy the Center receives from government is purely for indigent patients.

LCP: A Brief History

The Lung Center of the Philippines was officially created on January 16, 1981. However, the idea of a specialty institution for lung diseases was already being entertained as early as 1974.

The fact that the Quezon Institute was not so effective in providing assistance to patients with respiratory diseases (with a 48.4 percent yearly death rate) spurred the need to create the LCP. Through the efforts of the late Enrique M. Garcia, former Health Minister, a 12-hectare lot in Quezon City was acquired from the National Housing Authority (NHA) and construction of the LCP commenced in 1979.

On January 23, 1982, the Center was inaugurated with Dr. Priscilla J. Tablan as its first Director. She was succeeded by Dr. Calixto A. Zaldivar who expanded the Center's predominantly service-orientation to include research, training and education. Following next was Dr. Fernando A. Melendres who continued the trailblazing initiatives of his predecessors.

When the Center was burned down on May 16, 1998, the vision to develop the Center as the country's premier center for lung and other chest diseases refused to die. In the face of uncertainties fueled largely by the disaster, the Center's current Executive Director Dr. Rubio was appointed to head the hospital by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

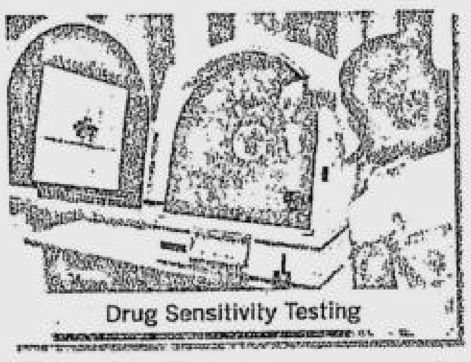
Dr. Rubio was then Assistant Secretary for Management Services of the Department of Health. An obstetrician, he gave up the practice in 1989 to fully concentrate on hospital administration and management. It was his leadership of the Ilocos Training Regional Medical Center that launched him into national prominence and which helped prepare him for the stewardship of the Lung Center.

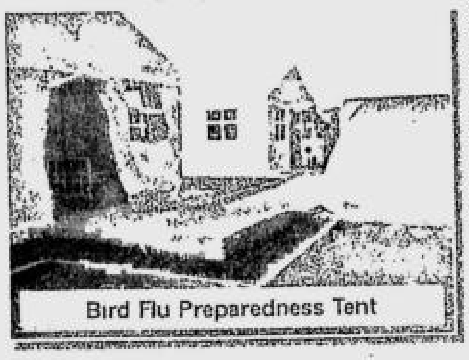
Dr. Rubio, who developed a reputation at the Department of Health (DOH) as an effective troubleshooter, was expected only to stay at the Lung Center temporarily. This temporary stint, however, was extended after his retirement as Assistant Health Secretary.

He rationalized the structure and operations of the Center, and encouraged revenue-generating alternatives to help finance the services and the expansion of the hospital facilities. With his expertise in financial management, he stabilized the Center's cash flow and instituted moves to sustain operations without sacrificing the quality of services to the patients

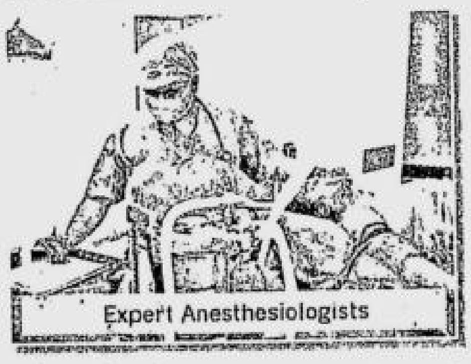
At present, hopes are high among the staff and employees of the Center that its current growth will be sustained and help establish the Lung Center of the Philippines as it was envisioned: "the premier institution for lung and other chest diseases providing quality healthcare through excellent service, training and research."

LUNG CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES


Drug Sensitivity Testing


Bird Flu Preparedness Tent

Botika ng Bayan
BOTIKA AtbP


Expert Anesthesiologists

Pre-operation Care

As the Lung Center of the Philippines observes its 24th Anniversary, it looks back with pride that despite the fire that gutted its offices and hospital some years ago and the talks about its abolition, it has survived and is poised to do better.

At no time is the Lung Center more relevant than now, as cases of respiratory-related illnesses continue to rise - not because we have been remiss in our work at health care and rehabilitation but because of the rapid changes in the environment – the air, the land and the waters, which have contributed to the decline of overall wellness of our people.

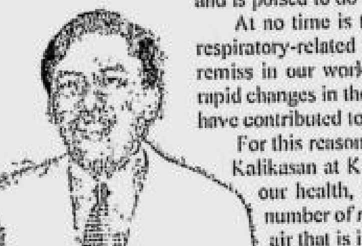
For this reason, we have adopted the theme "Ugnayan sa Kalusugan, Kalikasan at Kapaligiran," to highlight how our environment affects our health, particularly lung health. It is no secret that a great number of respiratory diseases traced their origins from the "dirty" air that is inhaled in the lungs.

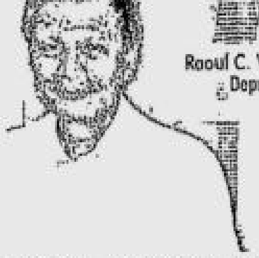
This situation means that we are in need of a paradigm shift in addressing lung diseases. This shift calls out for a strong advocacy for a cleaner environment as a pre-determinant for a healthier life. It is not enough that we focus merely on better ways of treating diseases but more importantly, we should effectively address preventive measures.

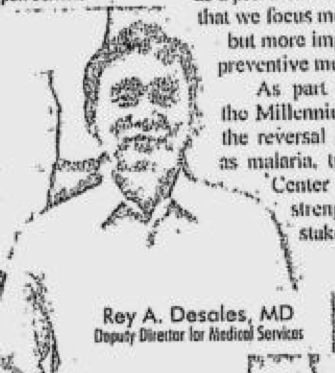
As part of our government's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, which include the reversal of major diseases in the country such as malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS, the Lung Center of the Philippines looks forward in strengthening its partnerships with relevant stakeholders to meet these goals.

Thank you and God bless us all.

Juanito A. Rubio, M.D., MHA., CESO II
Executive Director
Lung Center of the Philippines


Raoul C. Villarete MD, FPGCP, FPCP
Deputy Director for Hospital Support Services


Roberto A. Montevirgen, MD
Manager, Outpatient Dept.
Chair LCP 24th Anniversary


Rey A. Desales, MD
Deputy Director for Medical Services

Francisco T. Duque III
DOH Secretary

Juanito A. Rubio, MD, MHA., CESO II
Executive Director

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

JANUARY 16, 2006 (Monday)
- Flag Ceremony
- Opening of the LCP's Anniversary Exhibit (9:00 am)
  Ceremonial Cutting of Ribbon by Secretary Francisco T. Duque III & Dr. Juanito A. Rubio
- Free Clinic – (OPD) – PFT, TB Sputum Exam, & Chest X-Ray

JANUARY 17, 2006 (Tuesday)
- Continuation of Free Clinic
- TV & Radio Guesting
- DENR "Seminar on Proper Maintenance of Motor Vehicles" (For LCP Personnel & their Friends)
- DENR FREE Emission Test of Vehicles(For LCP Personnel & their Friends)

JANUARY 18, 2006 (Wednesday)
- Continuation of Free Clinic
- TV & Radio Guesting
- Continuation of DENR FREE Emission Test of Vehicles (open to the Public)

JANUARY 19, 2006 (Thursday)
- Bike for Health (5:00 am)
- Launching of the "Covenant For a Healthy Environment" spearheaded by DENR, MMDA, Lung Center and the Quezon City Government (8:00 – 10:00am)
- Ground-breaking ceremonies for the LCP "Mini Forest Park" with Sec. Mike Defensor, MMDA Chairman Bayani Fernando, Cong. Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo, Cong. Mat Defensor, Cong. Roque Ablan and Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista as Special Guests.
- Launching of LCP's "Waterlines Upgrading Project" (Lingap Ospital) with Manila Water President Antonino T. Aquino as Special Guest
- Press Conference

JANUARY 20, 2006 (Friday)
- Inauguration of the LCP "Bird Flu Preparedness Facility" (10:00 am) with Congresswoman Nanette Daza and Congresswoman Annie Susano as Special Guests
- Blood Letting (8:00am to 5:00 pm)
- Employees "Fellowship Night"
- Coronation of "Mr. & Ms. LCP"

JANUARY 23, 2006 (Monday)
- Thanksgiving Mass – 8:30am @ Main Lobby
- 24th Recognition Rites – 1:30 pm @ Main Lobby with Q.C. Mayor Feliciano Belmonte as Guest Speaker

Inquirer goes to 63rd Golden Globe Awards

From page A1

(Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana) and Best Original Song ("A Love That Will Never Grow Old," by Gustavo Santaolalla and Bernie Taupin).

The strong support for "Brokeback" from the 90-plus members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which votes on and hands out the Golden Globe Awards, boosted the film's chances in the coming Oscar Awards.

"Brokeback's" Heath Ledger was shut out by Philip Seymour Hoffman, who won the Best Actor (Film, Drama) for his compelling performance as celebrated author Truman Capote in "Capote." Felicity Huffman triumphed as Best Actress (Film, Drama) for her portrayal of a pre-operation transsexual (male to female) in "Transamerica."

The night's biggest upset was by Mary-Louise Parker of "Weeds" who won the Best Actress (Musical or Comedy TV Series) defeating all four "Desperate Housewives" Huffman, Teri Hatcher, Marcia Cross and Eva Longoria.

1st Golden Globe awardees

Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon, the leads in the Johnny Cash biopic "Walk the Line," took home the Best Actor and Best Actress (Film, Musical or Comedy) trophies, respectively.

"Walk the Line" grabbed the Best Film (Musical or Comedy) honors. Phoenix, Witherspoon and Huffman's victories were their first Golden Globe awards.

The evening's first acting honors were given to George Clooney in the Best Supporting Actor (Film). Clooney quipped, "This is too early. I haven't had a drink yet," referring to the Golden Globes' legendary party, booze-fueled atmosphere at the Beverly Hills Hilton. Rachel Weisz, a murdered diplomat's wife in "The Constant Gardener," earned the Best Supporting Actress (Film) trophy.

Also celebrating its first Golden Globe victory is Palestine's "Paradise Now," a timely drama about the last two days of two suicide bombers, that earned the Best Foreign Language Film honors. It beat out China, which had two nominees ("Kung Fu Hustle" and "The Promise"), France ("Joyeux Noel") and South Africa ("Tsotsi").

Party of the year

John Williams, whose last Golden Globe win was 23 years ago for "E.T.," won again with Best Original Score for his lush music for "Memoirs of a Geisha."

Anthony Hopkins was honored with the Cecil B. DeMille lifetime achievement award. Hopkins, who was introduced by his "Proof" costar, Gwyneth Paltrow, exclaimed: "I'm not through yet!"

In the TV categories, the "Desperate Housewives" may have lost to Parker in the Best Actress race, but their show won the Best TV Comedy or Musical series. "Lost" earned a Globe in the Best TV Drama Series.

As hinted by Clooney in his acceptance speech, the Golden Globe Awards, while growing in prestige in recent years, had retained its reputation as Hollywood's party of the year. Small Moet & Chandon champagne bottles were being passed around on the red carpet, even before the attendees had reached the main ballroom.

Husbands on the sidelines

"Memoirs of a Geisha" star Ziyi Zhang, in a flowing green gown, was easily the night's fashion standout. Ang Lee was modest when asked by this reporter on the red carpet about "Brokeback's" chances.

William Macy, the acclaimed actor-husband of Huffman, smiled from the sidelines and let his wife get the paparazzi treatment, for a change. "I am enjoying this," he remarked.

Also glad to be out of the paparazzi limelight was Kevin Bacon, whose wife, Kyra Sedgwick, was nominated for Best Actress, TV Drama series. "This is the best," Bacon told us as he waited on the sidelines for Sedgwick to finish her red carpet walk.

Goody bags

The night's grand party atmosphere continued with five big after-parties, all held simultaneously at the grounds of the Beverly Hills Hilton.

The best party was tendered by Warner Bros. and InStyle. Filled with Hollywood A-listers, flowing wine and a rocking live band provided the loose and carefree atmosphere.

Coming a close second was the joint party of Universal, Focus Features and NBC. The entire top floor of a parking garage was converted into a lush oasis.

HBO staked its usual party site—the hotel poolside. The film company 20th Century Fox took over the Stardust Room at the hotel's top floor. The Weinstein Company celebrated at the legendary hangout of old Hollywood, Trader Vic's.

By the end of the evening, most guests were lugging around goodie bags filled with articles estimated to cost at least $1,500. The show's 50-plus presenters received goodie bags with items costing at least $62,000.

And the winner is ...

Film:
Film, Drama: "Brokeback Mountain"
Actress, Drama: Felicity Huffman, "Transamerica"
Actor, Drama: Philip Seymour Hoffman, "Capote"
Film, Musical or Comedy: "Walk the Line"
Actress, Musical or Comedy: Reese Witherspoon, "Walk the Line"
Actor, Musical or Comedy: Joaquin Phoenix, "Walk the Line"
Foreign Language Film: "Paradise Now," Palestine
Supporting Actress: Rachel Weisz, "The Constant Gardener"
Supporting Actor: George Clooney, "Syriana"
Director: Ang Lee, "Brokeback Mountain"
Screenplay: Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana, "Brokeback Mountain"
Original Score: John Williams, "Memoirs of a Geisha"
Original Song: "A Love That Will Never Grow Old" from "Brokeback Mountain" by Gustavo Santaolalla and Bernie Taupin
Television:
Drama series: "Lost"
Actress, Drama: Geena Davis, "Commander in Chief"
Actor, Drama: Hugh Laurie, "House"
Musical or Comedy: "Desperate Housewives"
Actress, Musical or Comedy: Mary-Louise Parker, "Weeds"
Actor, Musical or Comedy: Steve Carell, "The Office"
Miniseries or TV Movie: "Empire Falls"
Actress, Miniseries or TV Movie: S. Epatha Merkerson, "Lackawanna Blues"
Actor, Miniseries or TV Movie: Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, "Elvis"
Supporting Actress: Sandra Oh, "Grey's Anatomy"
Supporting Actor: Paul Newman, "Empire Falls"
Cecil B. DeMille Award: Anthony Hopkins

Ruben Nepales

JANET NEPALES/CONTRIBUTOR

"READY when you are, Cecil," Anthony Hopkins ends his remarks after he received the Cecil B. de Mille Life Achievement Award, which honors his body of work on film over 40 years.

BI throws out alien rap vs ABS-CBN's news head Maria Ressa

From page A1

the complaint, saying Ressa, an international broadcast journalist, was already a Filipino.

Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said that Ressa—who is also an American citizen—acquired dual citizenship on Dec. 14, 2004 and was issued an identification certificate on Jan. 10, 2005.

Hence, Ressa (whose full name is Maria Angelita) is a Filipino and does not fall under the BI's mandate, Fernandez said.

"We have no jurisdiction over Filipinos," Fernandez said.

Since Ressa is a Filipino, she does not need to get a work permit from the BI in order to be employed, he added.

The complaint was filed by Lita Montilla, who said she used to be the director and senior producer of ABS-CBN's International Broadcast Services Group. She is among former ABS-CBN people suing the network for illegal dismissal.

ABS-CBN branded the deportation case "a clear issue of harassment."

Natural-born Filipinos

Under Republic Act No. 9225, natural-born Filipinos who later become citizens of another country can apply for dual citizenship because they are deemed not to have lost their Philippine citizenship.

Ressa was Jakarta bureau chief of the US network CNN before joining ABS-CBN.

Her latest job has not been without controversy.

It was under Ressa's helm that the company downsized its news and current affairs staff last year.

Montilla unconvinced

Ressa was also in the news recently when she denied that ABS-CBN's decision to axe the show "Magandang Gabi, Bayan," made popular by Vice President Noli de Castro, had something to do with De Castro's support of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Montilla refused to accept Fernandez's statements.

"I doubt very much what Alipio Fernandez is saying," Montilla said.

'USA-American'

She said the latest travel record she got from the BI showed that Ressa's nationality was listed as "USA-American." She said even BI regulation chief Edgardo Mendoza was not aware of Ressa's dual citizenship.

"When I was getting the travel records for my complaint, Gary Mendoza told me that all of my efforts would be moot and academic if Maria Ressa applies for dual citizenship. Why would he say 'if she applies for citizenship' if she had already applied?" Montilla said.

No inconsistency

She said she was surprised when Fernandez later said that Ressa had applied for dual citizenship.

Mendoza told the Inquirer he really was not aware of Ressa's dual citizenship because such applications were handled by another division.

"Those with dual citizenship can use both or either of their passports," Mendoza said.

Upgrading operations

In its statement, ABS-CBN said Montilla was not an employee but merely "someone who used to sell news materials from ABS-CBN to international broadcast networks."

"The departure of Montilla from ABS-CBN is only part of the process of upgrading newsroom operations which began last year," it said.

Parrot blamed for breakup: It squawked …

From page A1

25-year-old call center worker Suzy Collins that she was having a 4-month fling with a former colleague when the pet blurted out: "Gary, I love you," British newspapers reported Tuesday.

The bird had previously said, "Hiya, Gary," when Collins' mobile phone rang and made kissing noises when the name was mentioned on radio or television, but its owner, Chris Taylor, from Leeds, northern England, laughed it off.

But the computer programmer—who bought the bird as a chick and named it after singer David Bowie's alter ego, Ziggy Stardust—said the penny dropped when the couple were snuggled up on the sofa before Christmas.

Moment of truth

"We were watching telly [television] when Ziggy blurted out, 'I love you, Gary' in Suzy's voice. I started laughing but when I looked at Suzy, I could tell something was up. Her face was like beet root and she started to cry," the 30-year-old said.

"I felt sick to my stomach. She told me that she'd been seeing someone she'd met at work called Gary and that she wanted to finish with me.

"She said she was going to tell me anyway but she didn't know how and couldn't find the right time. I've no idea who this Gary is. I was devastated. Suzy left that night and I've not seen her since.

Goodbye, Ziggy

"She came back to collect her stuff when I was out. I hope I never see her again."

Collins told newspapers she was not proud of her actions but admitted she never liked Ziggy in the first place.

Taylor—already divested of a girlfriend—has now given away Ziggy.

"I couldn't get him to stop saying that bloody name ... what else could I do?" he said.

AFP

Payback time: Fil-Am doctors return home

From page A1

to bring medical services to far-flung provinces.

The PFP and the Philippine Coast Guard's BRP Pampanga, normally used for search and rescue operations, set sail for Palawan yesterday afternoon to provide free medical services and health education to residents of Coron.

Hospital ship

The vessel has been turned into a well-equipped hospital ship, carrying at least 35 volunteer doctors and part of the $7.7 million in medical supplies and equipment donated by PFP.

Herbosa said the hospital ship would be very useful in an archipelago like the Philippines.

"When medical missions are conducted, it's usually by land or air. But there are several towns that have no access to medical help except by sea or water," he said at a press conference.

He said people who get sick in far-flung provinces usually have to travel hours just to see a medical professional.

Surgery

The 10 foreign and at least 25 Filipino doctors joining the mission will offer a host of medical services, including general surgery and eye operations.

The surgical team will be performing most of its work at the Coron hospital. Montero said some members of the team would try to conduct minor surgery aboard the ship if the waters were calm.

The PCG's search and rescue ships like the BRP Pampanga are equipped with facilities like operating tables and surgical lights.

Next stop, Camiguin

After its stop in Coron, which would end Jan. 22, the BRP Pampanga is scheduled to go to Camiguin, where Montero said officials had been requesting a medical mission.

For his part, the PCG commandant, Vice Admiral Arthur Gosingan, acknowledged that a medical mission was a worthy cause but mounting one was not easy because of the cost.

Fortunately, organizers of this particular medical mission have been able to gather the necessary resources, according to Gosingan.

Also making the mission possible was the 16,000 liters of fuel donated by the Pilipinas Shell Foundation for the Coron mission. The fuel is worth about half a million pesos.

"It's an accomplishment to put it together with no budget and no money except big hearts," Herbosa said.

RP nurses to infuse young blood into Hawaii health care system

From page A1

The agreement is aimed at improve nursing instruction at UNP. KCC nursing instructors will send instructors to Vigan while the UNP will send its nursing instructors to Hawaii for training.

Communication skills

Dr. Susan Refuerzo, executive director of the UNP nursing program, said KCC would conduct reviews for UNP nursing students so they could pass state and other nursing board examinations in Hawaii.

"Most importantly, they would be taught communication skills, which are severely lacking among our students," Refuerzo said.

Under the MOA, selected UNP nursing students will be sent as interns to KCC.

Dennis Kawarahada, assistant nursing dean of KCC, said 40 percent of KCC nursing students were of Filipino heritage.

Hawaii state records show that more than 1,000 graduates of nursing schools in the Philippines are working as nurses in Hawaii.

Lingle said her state would not have survived without Filipino health professionals.

Critical role

"Filipino nurses and caregivers play a critical role. The health care system [in Hawaii] could not have functioned without the Filipinos," she said.

The MOA was worked out by Hawaii State Rep. Dennis Irakaki for three years.

"All of the past agreements were just flowery words on paper but these would become flowers that would bear fruit," Irakaki said.

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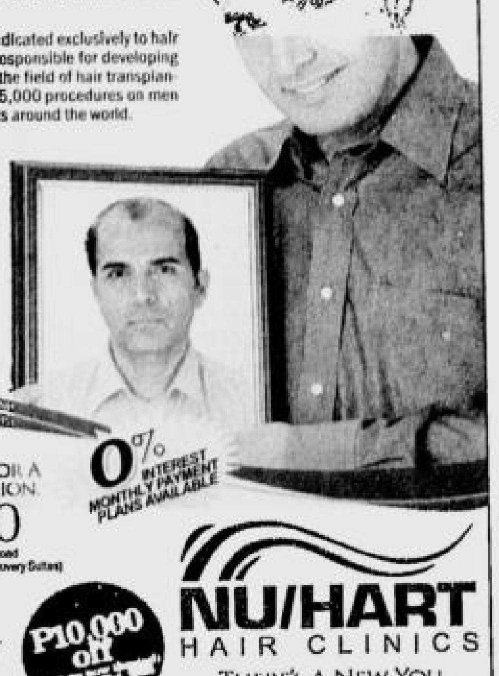

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Airlines buck $5 security fee, say it's gov't's burden

By Nikko Dizon

THE INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION Association (IATA), the trade association representing the international airline industry, has criticized the $5 (P260) security fee proposed by the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa).

According to IATA, the cost of the security enhancements in international airports should be shouldered by the state, referring to the Philippine government, and not the flying public, the Airline Operators Council (AOC) said yesterday.

Santi Medrana III, AOC vice chair, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that the AOC consulted IATA's opinion on the matter while the Miaa conducted public hearings on it last year.

Medrana said the AOC received IATA's reply in December.

OFWs excluded

The Miaa planned to charge passengers, except Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), with a security fee that would be used "to finance the further upgrading" of the security system of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

The Miaa aims to collect an estimated $14 million annually from the security fee.

In a statement released last year, the airport authority had said the revenue would be used for security enhancements such as the installation of a broad CCTV security system and a building intruder alarm system; the establishment of a centralized access system and a wider fiber optic network; upgrading all checkpoints; the purchase of protective gears; implementing a passenger profiling system; and the strengthening perimeter area.

The Miaa had conducted two public hearings, where no objections were raised against the imposition of a security fee.

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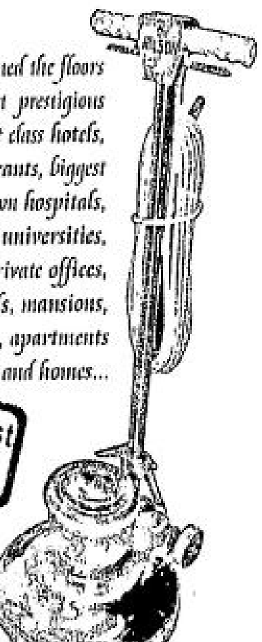

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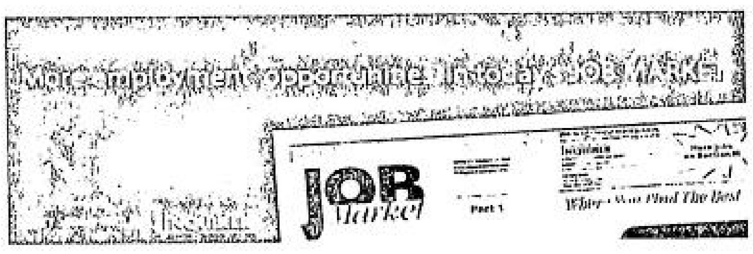

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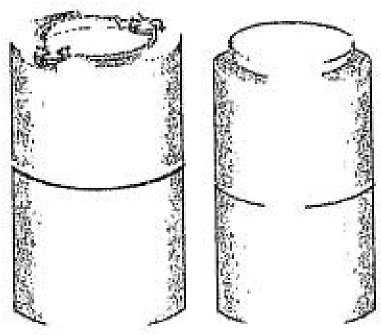

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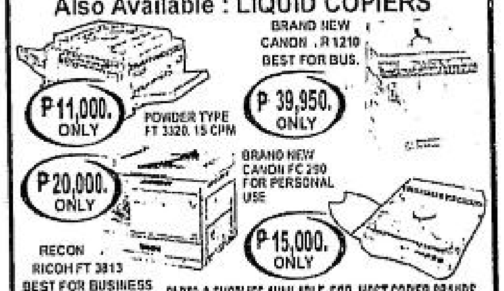

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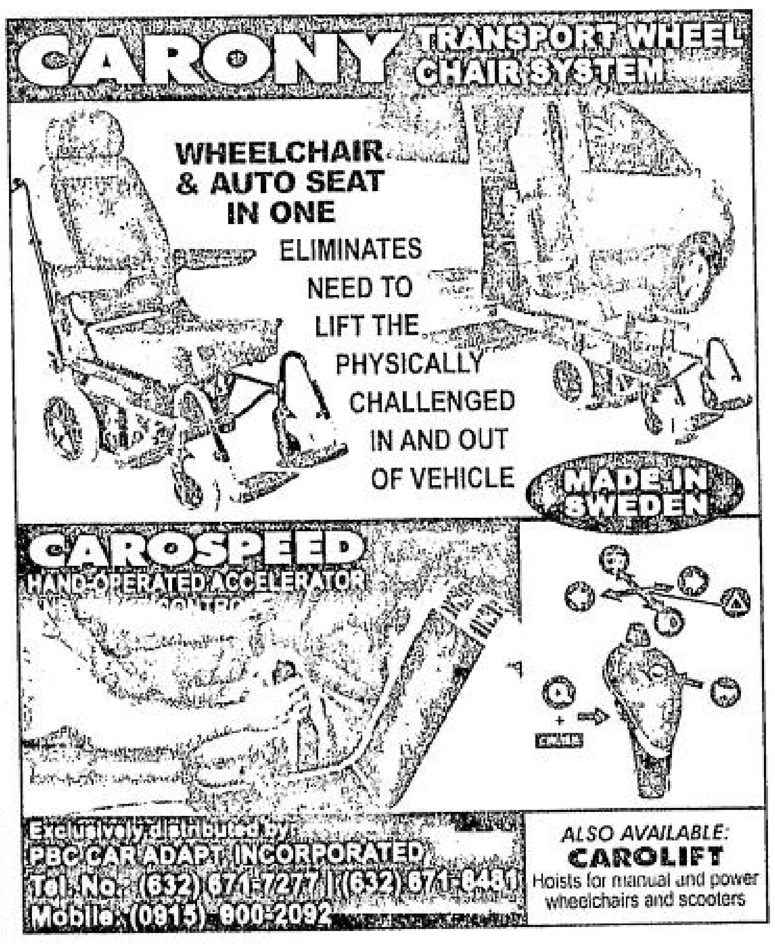

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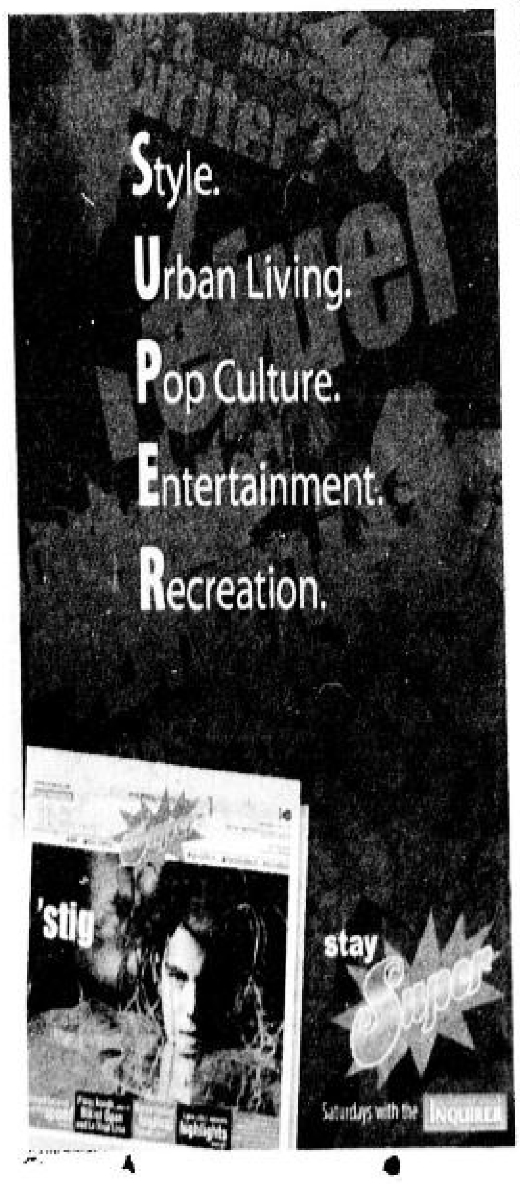

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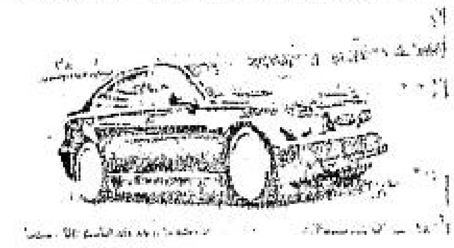

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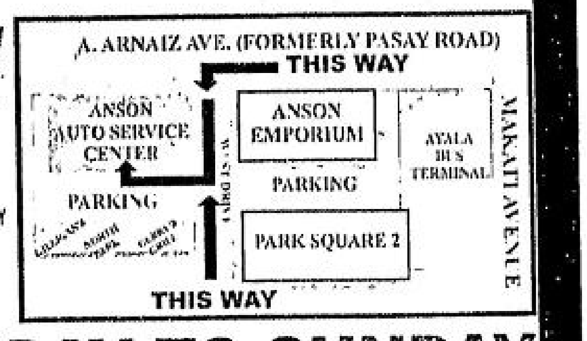

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

26 dead in Afghan suicide blasts

AFGHANISTAN—TALIBAN SUICIDE BOMBERS killed at least 26 people in two separate attacks in southern Afghanistan on Monday, a day after a Canadian diplomat and two civilians were killed in another attack in the area.

The combined toll was the worst in a day from suicide bombings in Afghanistan since US-led forces overthrew the Taliban in late 2001 and came just hours after President Hamid Karzai expressed concern about an increase in such attacks.

An adviser to Karzai said the aim of the insurgents appeared to be to frighten Nato members who plan to deploy in the volatile south and donors who are due to meet in London at the end of the month to draw up a new long-term assistance plan.

At least 20 people died in the town of Spin Boldak, bordering Pakistan, when a bomber on a motorcycle detonated a device after riding into a playground where hundreds of people had gathered for a festival, officials said.

At least 20 people were hurt in the attack, which the Afghan Islamic Press said happened during a wrestling contest.

"It was a suicide attack," Spin Boldak police chief Abdul Wasi Alekozai told Reuters. "The person rode his motorbike into the crowd and blew himself up. The intention of this attack was to create insecurity and fear."

Earlier, another suicide bomber hurled himself in front of an Afghan army vehicle in the heart of the provincial capital, Kandahar, 110 km to the north, killing three Afghan soldiers and two civilians.

Four Afghan soldiers and 10 civilians were also wounded.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for both bombings.

Taliban official Mullah Sabir Momin said the attack in Spin Boldak had been aimed at the commander of the Afghan border force, General Abdul Raziq, but he was not at the event.

He said seven Afghan soldiers were among the dead.

"We plan more attacks on Afghan army commanders because they support the US presence in Afghanistan," he said.

Assadullah, a witness to the bombing in Kandahar City, said the attacker appeared to be a teenager.

"I saw a boy of about 15 with an explosives' vest running towards the car and then heard the explosion," he said. "I ran for cover and saw the casualties when I got up." Flesh and blood could be seen scattered around at the scene.

Speaking at his fortified palace in Kabul, Karzai said increased use of suicide attacks showed Taliban desperation.

However, he added: "They cause insecurity, worry among people... disrupt life. They are a matter of concern for us ... we will use all means to prevent them."

On Sunday, an apparent suicide attack on a Canadian military convoy in Kandahar city killed 59-year-old Glyn Berry, a veteran Canadian foreign affairs official, and two Afghans. Three Canadian soldiers were wounded, two critically.

The past few months have seen a spate of Taliban suicide attacks, mainly targeting US-led troops and Nato peacekeepers, but they have not caused major casualties among foreign forces.

Security analysts suspect the Taliban has stepped up suicide attacks after seeing al-Qaida's success in Iraq. *Reuters*

California executes oldest inmate

SAN FRANCISCO—CALIFORNIA'S oldest death row inmate, a blind and partially deaf convicted killer, was executed early Tuesday, the day after his 76th birthday.

Clarence Allen was put to death by lethal injection after failing to convince Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the US Supreme Court that he was in such poor health that killing him would be cruel.

Frail, diabetic and confined to a wheelchair since a near-fatal heart attack in September, Allen was executed in San Quentin Prison across the bay from this city, according to Lt. Thomas Mullen.

Allen was pronounced dead 18 minutes after the execution began in the prison's death chamber at 12:20 a.m. (0820 GMT), prison officials said.

"It was very quiet," Mullen told AFP. "There were no problems."

The Supreme Court had refused to intervene on Monday with the justices dismissing Allen's claim that the death penalty being imposed on an elderly, sick and legally blind prisoner constituted cruel and unusual punishment.

The federal court also rejected Allen's argument that the 23 years he spent on death row was cruel and unusual.

Schwarzenegger had denied Allen's request for clemency three days earlier, one month to the day after refusing to halt the execution of Stanley "Tookie" Williams, a purportedly reformed gangster. *AFP*

Who really discovered America? Zheng He or Christopher Columbus?

BEIJING—A PROMINENT CHINESE lawyer and collector unveiled an old map on Monday that he and some supporters say should topple one of the central tenets of Western civilization: That Europeans were the first to sail around the world and discover America.

The Chinese map, which was drawn in 1763 but the lawyer says is a reproduction of a map dated 1418, presents the world as a globe with all the major continents rendered with an exactitude that European maps did not have for another century and a half, after Columbus, Da Gama, Magellan, Dias and others had completed their renowned explorations.

But the map got a cool reception from some Chinese scholars and seems unlikely to persuade skeptics that Chinese seamen were the first to round the world.

Liu Gang, a partner in a well-known Beijing law firm and an amateur historian, said Monday that he bought the map for $500 in a Shanghai book store in 2001 and only subsequently discovered its value. He said he had consulted scholars in the field and had done extensive research of his own before deciding to present his findings to the public. "The main issue is not the map itself," he said at a news conference. "It is the potential of the information in the map to change history."

At issue are the seven voyages of Zheng He, whose ships sailed the Pacific and Indian oceans from 1405 to 1432. Historical records show that he explored Southeast Asia, India, the Persian Gulf and the east coast of Africa, using navigational techniques and ships that were far ahead of their time.

But a small group of scholars and hobbyists, led by former British Navy submarine commander Gavin Menzies, argue that Zheng He traveled much farther than most Chinese and Western scholars say. Notably, Menzies claims that Zheng He visited America in 1421, 71 years before Columbus arrived there. *New York Times News Service*

Africa's 1st woman president sworn in

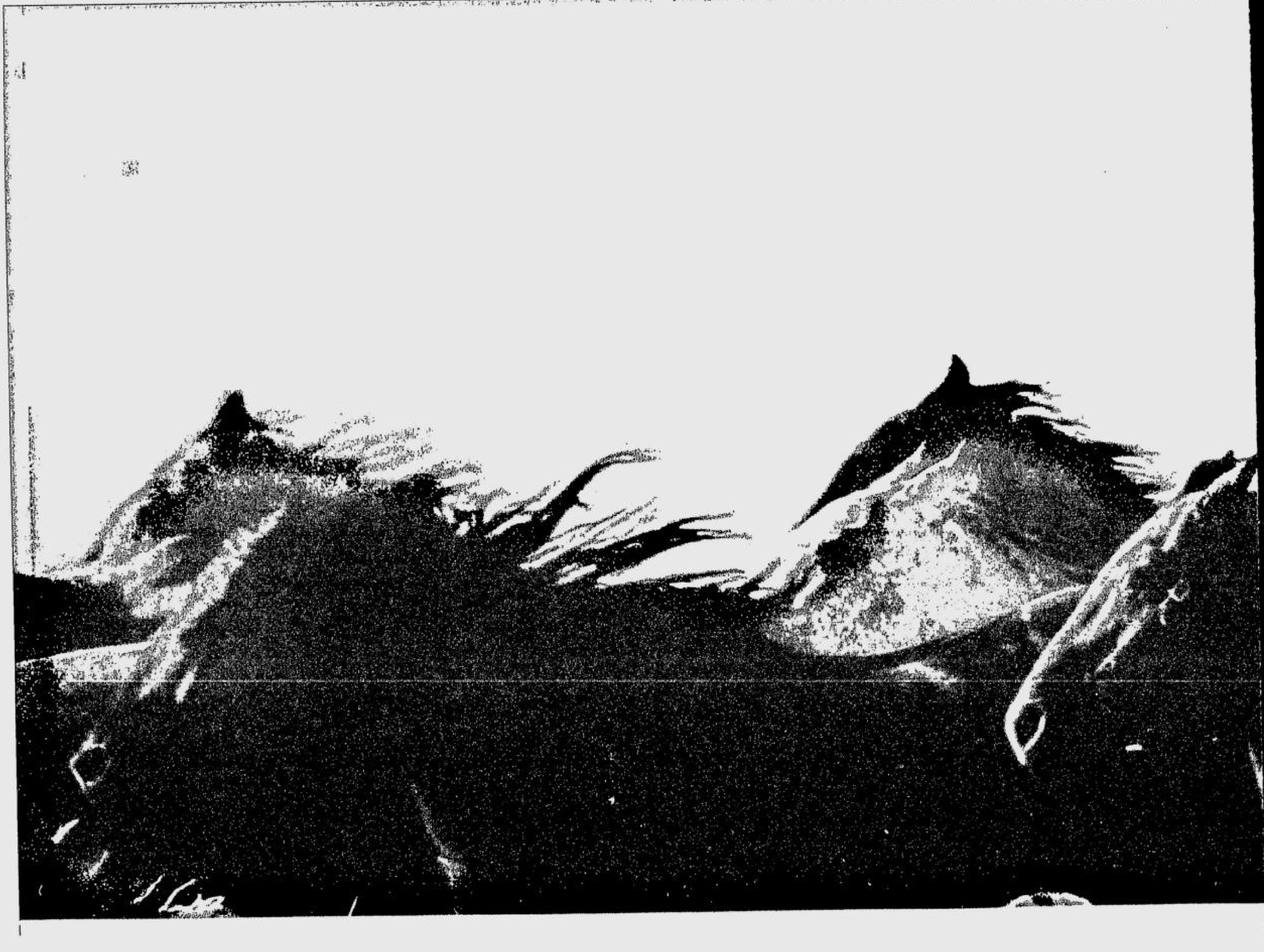
MONROVIA—LIBERIA'S ELLEN Johnson-Sirleaf took office as Africa's first elected woman president on Monday, pledging to break with the country's history of corruption and violence that spread war to neighboring states.

The colorful, open-air inauguration was attended by US first lady Laura Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, signaling US backing for Africa's oldest republic, founded in 1847 by freed slaves from America.

Johnson-Sirleaf, wearing a cream and gold dress, was sworn in to cheers from hundreds of foreign dignitaries and Liberians, including women wearing dresses emblazoned with her portrait.

"By their votes the Liberian people have sent a clear message that they want peace. They want to move on with their lives," she said in her first speech as leader of a nation left without basic services like water and power after a 14-year war that killed up to 250,000 people and ended in 2003.

The Harvard-trained economist, 67, said she would work to restore power to the ramshackle coastal capital Monrovia within 150 days of taking office. As part of her pledge to fight graft, she named the first members of her cabinet, including the ministers of finance and defense, both of whom have international experience and are likely to find favor with donors. *Reuters*



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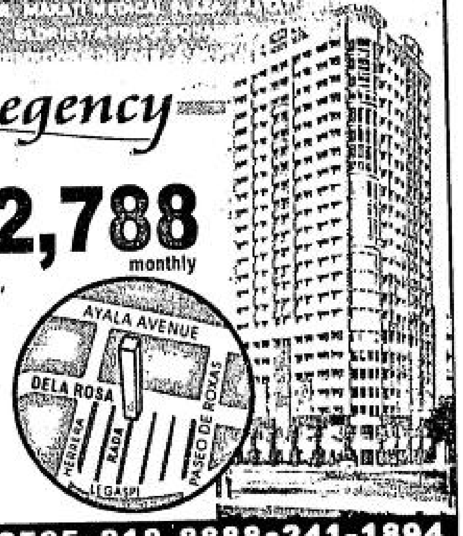

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OPINION

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Opposition à la carte

EDITORIAL

IN A SOCIETY IN WHICH TRADITION CARRIES LESS and less weight, it has become surprising when people agonize over whether to follow or set tradition aside. Tradition obviously continues to weigh heavily on Corazon Aquino, since she prefaced her declining to attend the Council of State with an apology. In these inappropriate times, to pay heed to propriety is in itself, a remarkable thing: and that is what she did. She recognized the power of tradition in ordinary times, but said it cannot apply in these extraordinary times.

The former president apologized to the country because tradition dictates that an invitation from the President of the Philippines should be viewed as a command. Not because of a feudal hangover, but due to the President being the head of state, and thus, representative of the entire Filipino people. But Aquino believes that when a head of state exists under a cloud of illegitimacy, then tradition must be set aside. Though she is old-fashioned and polite enough to make a distinction between the person and the office, in the case of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the distinction between the respect due the office, and whatever one feels about the person, cannot hold. The question of the President's fitness for office, must involve all things. Including invitations.

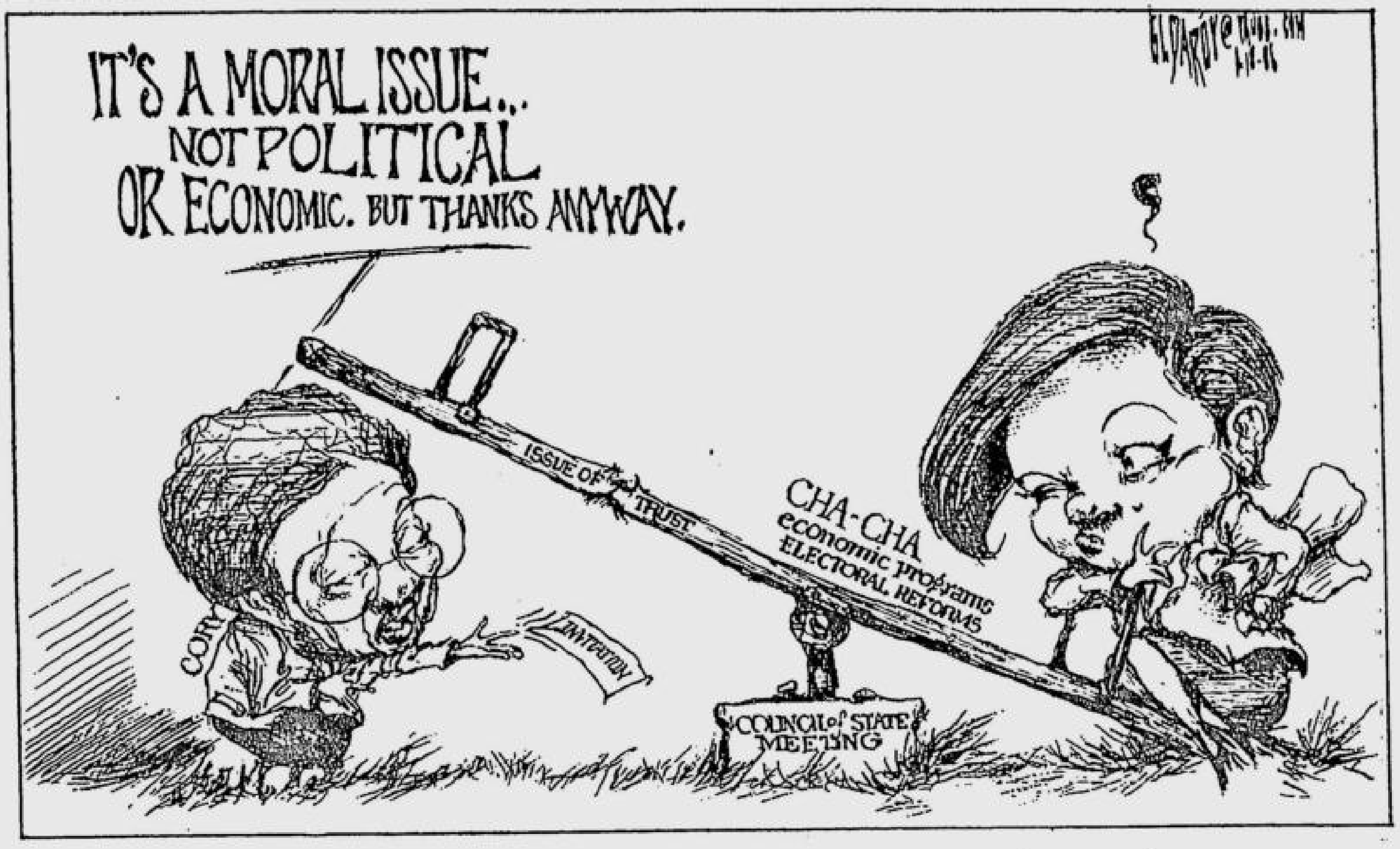
Aquino, said in her statement last Monday that she could not attend the Council of State for several reasons. First, because the incumbent's presidency remains hounded by issues of trust, without which an exercise such as the convening of the council is useless. Second, because it would be irresponsible of her, after having called for the President's resignation, to do anything that might lead people to think her stand has changed or her position is wavering. Third, because Ms Arroyo herself has made it impossible for the Council to achieve a genuine meeting of the minds. "Rather than resolve the issue in a transparent and forthright manner, the President has opted to muddle it further by insisting that any allusion to the legitimacy issue is part of a grand conspiracy to unseat her," Ms Aquino explained. In other words, the Council is meant to be an instrument of surrender, not an opportunity for genuine dialogue, much less, reconciliation. In other words, as we described it earlier, the whole thing is an attempt at window dressing.

Aquino's statement and actions at least demonstrate a desire to defend principle through consistent action. This is in contrast to the zigzagging of another former president, Fidel V. Ramos, who has demonstrated the dexterity of a destroyer evading torpedoes, but which accomplishes nothing except to show political derring-do in an essentially futile effort. Bravado is not statesmanship; leadership is nothing without sacrifice; and the politician who lives to grumble another day, is certainly many things but not a statesman.

Whether one agrees with her or not, Aquino's behavior and statements show that she is not prepared to sink so low, as to confuse a photo-op with a resolution of the crisis of legitimacy. Better a polite, but firm, refusal to collaborate than to end up being used as a prop, which is what happened to Ramos over the weekend.

The administration's response has been typical. Reacting to Aquino's decision to stay away from the meeting, the Palace insisted that it would proceed. The absence of Aquino and opposition leaders would have "no effect," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita. "The meeting will push through as no person or group can dictate on an official function like this."

For what? Ermita insists the Council will be a venue for the administration and the opposition to exchange views on how to solve the country's political, social and economic problems. And yet the opposition will not be there. So what is the public supposed to assume? Perhaps what we have been suggesting all along: that the administration is less interested in a dialogue, and is only looking for an opportunity to conduct a monologue. Or it could be, as Ferdinand Marcos used to do, that the administration has decided to embark on creating its own opposition, to be able to say it is willing to consult with its critics. And who might that be? Perhaps we will see when the photos are released by Malacañang after the Council of State is convened.



Now is the worst time to change the Charter

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

WITHOUT REALIZING IT, ADMINISTRATION congressmen and members of Lakas-CMD, in pushing for Charter change and a parliamentary form of government, are showing very clearly to the people why we should not change the Constitution to have a parliamentary government.

A parliamentary/unicameral government is run by the political party in power as if it is a dictatorship or a monarchy. There is no system of checks and balances as we now have in a presidential/bicameral government. The members of Parliament are also Cabinet members, and have influence over the Supreme Court and the judiciary. In other words, they can do pretty much what they want and there is nothing the people can do to stop them, except mount a revolution or a coup d'etat. If the majority party can do what it is now doing in a bicameral government in rushing headlong into Cha-cha, imagine what it will do in a parliamentary government.

Lakas is railroading a new constitution that is supposed to be in place by the middle of this year, according to its timetable or, to be more accurate, that of the Gang of Three—Speaker Jose de Venecia, former President Fidel V. Ramos and President Macapagal-Arroyo. These three are behaving as if they own the Philippines and their Lakas partymates are behaving like a pack of lapdogs. Together, they all act like a crime syndicate no different from the Mafia or Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves. They want a new constitution and a parliamentary government and they're going to have them even if 80 million Filipinos don't want them.

Fortunately, we still have a Senate (which the new Constitution will abolish) that stands like a big rock blocking the railroad. "Pure inanity," Sen. Joker Arroyo said of the talks among the Gang of Three on how the Constitution will be changed.

"The initiative to amend or revise the Constitution rests exclusively with Congress, absent an initiative law," fumed Arroyo. "The executive branch has no say in it. But the GMA-FVR-JDV troika acts as if it is the Senate."

The principal argument for a unicameral system is that legislation would be faster as it eliminates the "gridlock" that characterizes a bicameral legislature. But can you imagine what more inanities a single legislature can do, especially if its members would be the same congressmen we have now? Can you imagine what laws will be passed without a Senate to have a second look at them? A bicameral Congress is designed to prevent abuses and stupidity by one or the other house.

We don't need more laws passed quickly. What we need are fewer laws studied and crafted well by many bright minds. We already have too many laws that are not enforced. So many that even lawyers cannot remember them all and often contradictory that judges and justices have a difficult time deciding cases. Even decided cases sometimes contradict one another.

We don't need to change the Constitution either. What we need is to change the people implementing it. Let's kick out most of the present politicians and immediately things will be better.

Even if the present Constitution is not perfect (no constitution is), this is the worst time to change it, because the politicians who want to change it want change for the wrong reasons. Speaker Joe de Venecia, the most ardent exponent of Cha-cha, wants a parliamentary system so that he can be chief executive via parliament since he knows he can never be elected president under the present system. In a parliamentary system, he can successfully run for prime minister the same way he had himself elected Speaker several times.

Ramos, despite his avowals that he is not interested in being prime minister, really wants to be back in the saddle. He loves the limelight and being chief executive is the surest way to be there. He doesn't want to just fade away like any old soldier.

President Macapagal-Arroyo sees the Cha-cha as a way to divert attention away from questions about her legitimacy and therefore cling to power. She can even stay in power longer by becoming prime minister in the new government.

As I predicted in my New Year column, these three would double-cross one another in the fight for the prime ministership. It is happening already: FVR double-crossed GMA by demanding that she step down by 2007. JDV double-crossed his mentor and province mate by siding with GMA. And GMA double-crossed them both by deciding to stay until 2010 and beyond.

In other words, the politicians who want the Charter changed want it for selfish reasons, They don't have the welfare of the nation but their own personal welfare in mind. That is the worst reason for changing the Constitution.

Besides, assuming that some provisions need to be amended, we don't have to change the whole Constitution. We can introduce amendments one by one.

The US Constitution is still the same one that its founding others wrote. It has been amended several times, but it has not been changed even once. And America is now the richest and most powerful nation in the world, with a bicameral Congress like we have.

So let's amend our Constitution provision by provision, and the people can vote yes or no for each one. Changing the whole Charter at once mixes the good provisions with the bad ones, and the people have to vote for or against all in the plebiscite. In voting for the good provisions, they are forced to vote also for the bad ones.

And let's have a Cha-cha after the current politicians are out of office.

Changes

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

LAKAS MEANS STRENGTH. WHAT KIND OF strength it represents or means to exercise, you saw last Monday. Juan Flavier, a Lakas member who did not attend the Lakas meeting that day, put it this way. "*Yabang ng dating, machong macho. Gagawin nila 'yon, sabi nila, even without the Senate. Kaso e, hindi pwede* (They came on strong with a macho air. They were going to do it even without the Senate. The problem is, the law doesn't allow it)."

Flavier has got a point. But he forgets that neither GMA nor Fidel Ramos nor Jose de Venecia nor their ilk has shown herself or himself capable of being deterred by the law. On the contrary, they have repeatedly and consistently shown that they are above the law—no, that they **are** the law—and will use all their *lakas* to bend the world to their will. The problem is the senators? They will ignore the senators. The problem is the Senate? They will scrap the Senate.

Joker Arroyo is furious. The decision lies with the Senate, he says, not with Lakas. Well, that's what you get for playing a joker. If I recall right, he was the one who said in 2004 better to vote for a corrupt president than an idiotic one because we can remedy corruption constitutionally by impeachment while we cannot remedy idiocy by any means. He did not know GMA. None of them did. There is no constitutional remedy there. The Constitution will be remedied before she is.

GMA justifies this by saying there is a pressing need for change. The people are tired of political noise and want to reform the political system. Hence, Charter change. She misses the point completely.

Of course, there is a pressing need for change. But she is wrong about what needs changing. We do not need to change the Charter, we just need to change her.

There is nothing wrong with the Charter, there is everything wrong with her. The Charter is genuine, the president is fake. Changing the Charter presumably because it is defective is like claiming when gold turns to dross at the touch of vinegar that the vinegar is fake, a joke wrongly attributed to the Moro peddler. There is nothing wrong with the vinegar, there is everything wrong with the gold. Change the gold, not the vinegar.

The Charter was made by commissioners who fought a dictatorship and distinguished themselves in various fields for their courage and probity. They crafted a Charter that sought to prevent a dictatorship from ever rising again, suffusing the fundamental law with the spirit of libertarianism and respect for human rights. Today's call for a new Charter is being led by a non-president who hid under the bed while others fought a brewing tyranny, who distinguished herself only by appearing in public with Cory Aquino on one side and Jaime Cardinal Sin on the other. She wants a Charter that will prevent democracy from ever breathing again, assigning the making of it to crooks, hustlers and blackguards who are pleased to call their party "strong."

The public is not tired of "political noise," the public is tired of GMA. And over these past weeks probably of FVR and JDV, too. Look at the surveys. No, just listen to your neighbors. They do not say that the overwhelming majority of Filipinos find the Charter defective, they say the overwhelming majority of Filipinos find their president defective. They do not say that the overwhelming majority of Filipinos want their Charter retired, they say the overwhelming majority want their president removed. They do not say the overwhelming majority of Filipinos want to change their government from presidential to parliamentary, they say the overwhelming majority of Filipinos want to change their government from fake to genuine.

But then GMA was always confused about the nature of political noise. She has always thought votes were political noise. She has always thought the sovereign will was political noise. She has always thought questions of right and wrong were political noise. She is tired of that noise, not the people.

She is right: The people want to reform the political system. It is a rotten system that crushes them underfoot. The people want to reform a political system that allows a few *trapos* like Fidel Ramos, Jose de Venecia and GMA herself to decide what goes for the country without their knowledge and consent, their knowledge and consent being deemed political noise. They want to reform a political system where they have been excised from it like cancer and reduced not just to unwilling spectators but to helpless victims.

The people want to reform a system that has reached the absurd form of a presidential candidate calling up an election commissioner and conspiring with him to thwart the voters' will—and her supporters demanding afterward that the world prove there is something wrong with that. They want to reform a system that allows the same person to order all public officials on pain of firing or court martial to refrain from telling what they know about the elections, that turns everyone who protests the tyranny as destabilizers and subversives and fair game for truncheons and water cannons. They want to reform a system where a political Mafia, finding the Senate and the Constitution a superfluity, can remove them, where a mob, finding honesty and decency an obstacle, can crush them.

The people want to reform a political system that has attained the final stages of *trapo*hood, that has made lying, cheating and stealing the national good, that has carved on the presidential seal for all the world to see the motto: "So what?"

Change the Charter? Not on your life. The Charter is genuine, the President is fake Change the President, not the Charter.

Bishops meet the poor

COMMENTARY

Denis Murphy

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS, POOR people will rally outside the bishops' semi-annual meeting on Jan. 23. There won't be many poor people. The rally doesn't represent a great renewal or outburst of faith. It represents instead the efforts of a few people who remember the great work the bishops did for the poor during the martial law years and wish to have them re-commit themselves to be the Church of the Poor and to become again the staunch allies of the poor they once were.

The bishops may hear the poor as St. Paul heard the people of Macedonia when they called, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

The issues the poor will present have to do with food, water, jobs, evictions, education and health. Some have ideas about what changes in government should be made, but as a group or sector, they have decided the basic issues of food, etc. are more crucial for them. The bishops can respond to these issues, whatever they do about the more political ones.

If the bishops, or other good citizens ask, how they can help, some limited suggestions can be made, but solutions are difficult to come by given our present social structures. One thing can be done immediately, as the poor suggest in their letter to the bishops:

"Clergy, bishops or priests, don't have expertise to know exactly what to do. We don't ask for expertise. We ask instead that the Church consult with the poor and listen to them and support their efforts as they try to improve their lives. We ask the Church to be prophetic and stay on the side of the poor. There are many groups on the side of the powerful."

If people spend time with the poor, they will understand their fears, hopes, weaknesses, illusions, strengths and needs. They will also understand the often callous manner in which government deals with the poor. They will understand the complexity of problems.

A current issue that illustrates the need of such understanding is that of "Voluntary Demolitions" along the NorthRail and SouthRail. The scale of the relocation called for is huge: some 50,000 families between Caloocan and Calamba, and 18,000 families in Pampanga will be moved this year, a total of 374,000 people, a number greater than most of our cities' populations.

Voluntary demolition is the government's first tactic in the relocation drive and is a bad omen for the future. In this process, the government urges poor people on the tracks to move now to the relocation area in Cabuyao, although there is no regular water, light, school for the children, jobs, medical facilities, or any possible way a poor man can work in Manila and return to his family at night in the relocation area. All of which are required by law. Legally families should only be moved when the relocation site is prepared. The government is urging the poor to waive their legal rights.

Government people circulate in the area threatening the families, "If you don't move, there will be no place for you." The people are afraid they will not have a place if they do not volunteer. There is no one convincing enough to assure them relocation is a matter of legal right and they need not move. They don't even trust one another enough to name the government agents who threaten them. Most are like sheep moved along by government to a desolate place. Urging people to waive their rights to a prepared relocation site in a situation where threats are commonly used is an illegal act on the part of government, according to lawyers.

Not all the poor are afraid, however. On the Buendia Station of the SouthRail we met two women: Shynne Vinluan, 24, mother of three children, and Zenaida Estares, 48, mother of two. They and eight other families lived for up to 30 years behind the platform until it was demolished by the city. No place was given them. A SWAT team enforced the order. Snatchers and rugby boys hung out in the dark station and the police were after them. The poor people were collateral damage.

The people now live on the platform and sleep on the cement. They were offered voluntary relocation after they complained many times to government about their situation, but they said no. They will not take their children out of school to leave now. They will stay on the platform, uncomfortable and dangerous as it is, so their children will be educated.

When we asked Zenaida what she would ask the bishops to do if she met them, she said: "Tell the government to give back my husband's tools. He is a plumber (*tubero*) and saved for those tools all his life. The government demolition men stole them."

"Are you angry?"

"No, just sad. My daughter will have to stop studying at Lyceum. That is my great sorrow."

The poor need a more compassionate government, but they also need resolve, courage, a vision of what life can be and trust in one another. People who want to help, cleric or lay person, should help with both government and the people's shortcomings.

On second thought, we all need such help.

Denis Murphy works with the Urban Poor Associates.

The memory of a patriarch

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE LAST SUNDAY TO witness one family's commitment to fulfilling the dying wish of their patriarch, while ensuring that his memory lived on in the community where he was born and grew up.

I found myself at the blessing of the new "*kapilya*" in Barangay Malupa, Concepcion, Tarlac through a circuitous route. Late last year, I was commissioned to write an essay on the life of Doña Aurora Aquino as part of a book called "20 Heroes." The book is due to be released on the 20th Anniversary of the Edsa "People Power" Revolt next month. It features 20 personalities who played important roles in the events leading up to this historic event.

For the essay, I interviewed two of Doña Aurora's daughters: former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta and Maur Aquino-Lichauco. When the book's editor, Krip Yuson, asked for family pictures, Maur kindly offered to bring me to Concepcion to look over their family albums at their ancestral home. That's how I ended up in Concepcion last Sunday, part of the party of Aquinos who were attending the blessing of the chapel built by the Lising family, their distant relatives.

* * *

I HAD expected the chapel to be small, simple and rustic, and so we were all surprised to behold a spanking new place of worship designed along modern lines. Credit goes to architects Arnold David and his son John Paul, "Apo" Pidiong's son-in-law and grandson.

Fr. Allan David, who concelebrated the Mass, recalled that "Apo" Pidiong's dying words were "Please don't forget the chapel." Even Father Allan's own father, who had a hand in the chapel's construction, saw his work as part of a vow and vocation, the priest noted, ruing the fact that the old man didn't live to see the chapel's completion.

All the Lising children, most of whom are now professionals in Houston, Texas, came home for the chapel's blessing, as did the grandchildren and their 90-year-old mother who now also resides in Houston.

"This is our way of sharing our blessings," Mrs. Lising said, referring to the chapel, as well as their commitment to the community where her husband's memory lives on.

* * *

HERE is the second and concluding part of an article by Edmund Silvestre, which appeared in The Filipino Reporter, a newspaper for Filipino-Americans published out of New York, on a group of Fil-Am professionals who conduct regular medical missions in impoverished areas in the Philippines.

Much of the article was based on an interview with Vid Figueras, president of the Philippine-American Group of Educators and Surgeons (PAGES), based in New Jersey. Read on:

PAGES' main focus is the surgical repair of cleft lip, cleft palate, burn contractures and meningocele—the last one a congenital defect in the bony structures with swelling of the meninges (membrane around the brain and spinal cord).

"We specialize in cases involving kids and young adults because the impact we make in their lives is for lifetime," Figueras said. "You change the child's life by freeing him from the stigma and giving him confidence, then it changes the life of the child's family, and then the community."

"This is what we get from helping these people, the joy and satisfaction of seeing the lives of these people changed for the better," said Virgilio Odi, an auto mechanic who volunteers for PAGES, driving a container for up to 18 hours to pick up donations from Toledo, Ohio.

"I'm very proud that I am part of this organization," said Odi, a native of La Loma, Manila. "For me, the best part is when I see the parents of the kids crying tears of joy," said Douglas Malazzo, who hails from Tarlac. "They really cry in front of you and thank you endlessly for ending their child's misery."

* * *

A FREAK accident that knocked out several front teeth of retired engineer Tito Villanueva, while he was loading medical equipment into the container, didn't stop him from volunteering.

"Money can't buy the kind of feeling I get from here," said the San Ildefonso, Bulacan-born Villanueva. "Once you join our group and you experience the joy it brings to your life by helping the poorest of the poor, there's no way that you would leave," said Benz Cueto, a retired US Navy officer who is the group's director of supply.

"Every medical mission gives me the adrenaline rush," added Cueto, who hails from Lipa City. "Seeing happiness in the face of those people is incredible. If you missed one medical mission, it would make you feel like you missed a big part of your life."

For 15 years, politics, jealousy and power struggle never found their way on PAGES, a feat for a large Fil-Am organization that deals with a complex operation.

"So far, we have not encountered any problem," Figueras pointed out. "The secret is we never talk about who the group leader is. We are all officials here, *kaya walang away*. We just do our thing and we don't dwell on petty issues, knowing that many people rely on us."

Early this year, PAGES formed its Philippine chapter chaired by Ambassador Preciosa Soliven, Philippine envoy to Unesco and secretary general of the Unesco Commission of the Philippines. It is now working on its tax-exempt status in the Philippines. The group also welcomes possible tie-up with medical organizations, who may need support for medical supplies or even medical equipment.

"Our vision at PAGES is to see various medical groups coming together to hold a month-long medical mission in the Philippines," Figueras said. "Many Filipinos badly need our help and we should not discourage others to respond. We only live once and why not make the most of it by helping the less fortunate?

"That's where the real happiness comes from," he said. "I think that's what's everyone's purpose in life should be."

A church of the people and history

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo.

LAST THURSDAY, JAN. 12, 2006, PEOPLE GATHered at the Church of the Holy Sacrifice on the University of the Philippine campus to witness the unveiling of a bronze marker on the building, detailing its history and, most importantly, its declaration as a National Historical Landmark by the National Historical Institute (NHI) and an Important Cultural Treasure by the National Museum of the Philippines. Normally, a structure has to be at least a century old to be declared historically or, at least, chronologically important, but the UP chapel, which turned 50 only last month, was the fruit of the collaboration among professors of the UP College of Engineering and four young men who later were declared National Artists: Leandro V. Locsin (Architecture), Napoleon V. Abueva (Sculpture), Vicente Manansala and Arturo R. Luz (both for Visual Arts).

We can add another name to this already stellar cast as a bonus. I remember seeing a photograph of Manansala at work on the mural-sized Stations of the Cross that now adorn the walls of the church. He was being assisted by one of his students, who was in a T-shirt, jeans and *chinelas*, and I recognized the young Ang Kiukok who has also been declared a National Artist. Thus, this simple structure has the rare distinction of having been worked on—creatively—by five National Artists. This alone would justify its double declaration by the NHI and the National Museum.

It is unfortunate that we are so pre-occupied with the artistic merits of the church that we often overlook its place in Philippine architectural and building history. At the time when Rufino (later to be) Cardinal Santos declared it a church for modern times, it was the first circular church to be built in the Philippines. Bright young professors from the UP College of Engineering calculated and made the structural plans for the first thin shell concrete roof in the country. The dean of the College of Engineering, Alfredo Juinio, led a team that included Jose L. Segovia, Lamberto UN Ocampo and Felisberto G.I. Reyes, in pooling their talents and expertise to make the church a reality. And then there was David M. Consunji, now one of the most successful building contractors, who built the church that has been a landmark in his own professional career.

Locsin's first project was the UP chapel and he ended his long career by building another church, that of the Transfiguration in Malaybalay, Bukidnon, which is also a landmark in the area.

Among the many surprises that afternoon when the official ceremonies were being held was discovering that my father had something to do with the civil works for the chapel.

In my 45 years, I have some vague memories of a UP childhood, so teaching in Diliman today is a way to return to my roots, but finding my father in the church last week was a great surprise for me.

To make things more complicated, there was Eduardo Olaguer, better remembered as one of the key members of the Light-A-Fire Movement that planned bombings to destabilize the dictatorial government of Ferdinand Marcos. He and many other UP students, now forgotten by history, broke glass bottles that were added as aggregates to the concrete that went into the dome.

Aside from this, I learned that Olaguer was a student of my father. Like most young college students, he had a tendency to be delinquent, leading to what should have been a failing grade of 5. But my father gave him a conditional grade of 4 that was finally rounded off to a passing 3, allowing him to graduate from UP, go abroad and eventually make bombs and history.

One can say that a grade on a piece of paper is enough to alter a person's life and so my father can be said to have contributed to the Light-A-Fire Movement himself! Next time I hold a grading sheet and think what a grade means to a student's future, I will remember Olaguer and just hope that my student will amount to something—good or bad. Next time I give final grades, I will remember that I can make or ruin a life. Now that is real responsibility.

Modern theology reminds us that a church is not just a physical structure, a place for worship. A church is the people of God, a community of believers. No better proof of this can be seen than in the UP chapel and the inspiration that came from one man, the chaplain, American Jesuit John P. Delaney who died shortly after the church was completed. This explains why the unveiling and all the commemorations were held not on the date the church was completed on Dec. 20, 1955, not on the day the first Mass was celebrated there on Dec. 25, 1955, but on Jan. 12, 1955, the day Delaney died of heart failure. The church is now history but also part of people's lives and that is what makes it significant whether or not it is a declared landmark or cultural treasure. Let's hope UP will preserve it for the next century.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

'Sinto-sinto'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I WAS WATCHING A DVD OF THE FILIPINO FILM "MAGnifico" with some urban-poor kids, when one of them shouted out, "*Ay, sinto-sinto!*" He was describing Magnifico's little sister with her curled arms and legs, tilted head and difficulties in speaking.

It'd been a while since I heard the term, so I probed a bit to ask what she meant. She attempted a synonym: "*kulang-kulang*" (lacking), a term frequently used to refer to mental problems.

"Retarded," another kid chimed in.

I protested gently, and began to explain that Magnifico's sister was not necessarily retarded. What she had was cerebral palsy, the result of brain damage happening right around birth. One of the results of the brain injury is loss of muscular control, which is why the child has spastic (curled) limbs. Some will be mentally retarded but most of the behavioral problems and speech difficulties are actually partly due to the difficulties with muscle control (for example, around the mouth).

The kids listened with interest, occasionally naming and describing some child in the community who was "*sinto-sinto.*" It became clear to me that people were using the word to refer to different health problems such as cerebral palsy and Down's syndrome ("mongoloidism," a term falling into disuse because of its racial connotations).

One child referred to the public service ads that have been coming out on television with a child banging her head on the wall, the repetitive behavior suggesting autism.

Different, defective

In the exchange I had about "*sinto-sinto,*" my young friends also used the term "*diperensiya*" (defect), which sometimes overlaps with "*sinto-sinto.*" It's intriguing how we use this borrowed term from Spanish because the Spanish word for defect is, well, *defecto*. Difference is "*diferencia*" and that's it. So it seems that some time in our history, the Spanish "*diferencia*" mutated to our "*diperensiya*" and "defect."

All that tells us that we do have a tendency to equate "difference" with "defect." That shouldn't be surprising since we're still largely a conformist society, which is part of our being agrarian. We are actually quite quick to detect differences and to attach the label "*diperensiya,*" with its connotations of deviance.

Sometimes we take these labels for granted, even taking on a lackadaisical quality when we incorporate differences into our system of names. In one community, I was once introduced to someone named "Osang Sakang" (Bow-legged Osang) and another one called simply "Onse" because she had 11 fingers. People with such nicknames probably adapt quite well, but I sometimes wonder if some of them resent their christening, together with its stigmatization.

Out of tune

Let's get back to the term "*sinto-sinto,*" which actually takes off in another direction. During my exchange with the urban-poor kids about Magnifico's sister, no one could explain the origins of the word. When I got home, I checked Jose Panganiban's classic Tagalog dictionary-thesaurus published in 1970 and could not find it. But UP's Diksyunaryong Pilipino gave me the clue. "*Sinto-sinto*" was listed and defined, like the kids did, as "*kulang-kulang.*" Right after "*sinto-sinto*" though was the entry "*sintunado*" from the Spanish "*desentonado,*" and defined as "not in tune when singing." The link was obvious.

I shared my discovery with the kids, and one of them became quite animated, suddenly recalling that his grandmother used to tell him about how she had suitors who would serenade her and she would turn away those who were "*sinto-sinto,*" here meaning tone-deaf.

The pieces were now falling together. A person who is "*sinto-sinto*" is like a voice or a musical instrument that is out of tune. "*Sinto-sinto*" represents a gray area of conditions that are not seen as healthy but that are not necessarily sicknesses either. If we want to be philosophical about it, people who are "*sinto-sinto*" are there, part of the human condition, like that old guitar set aside for years because it was out of tune.

"*Sinto-sinto*" is a label that's put there, after the fact, after the condition. A poor family has a child whose behavior can't be explained, so *sinto-sinto*" is the label attached. Some families will say the child is a gift, *biyaya*, from heaven, which is fine, but the sadness, even frustration, still comes through in their voice.

Attuned

We need to be able to explain medical terms like autism and cerebral palsy to families, but at the same time, we should deal with local terms like "*diperensiya*" and "*sinto-sinto.*" I'm actually uneasy about the autism public service ads because they could end up creating new "*sinto-sinto*" or "*diperensiya*" stereotypes for a very complex condition, together with blaming. (My father commented, half in jest, "The child's that old and the mother never noticed the head-banging? That's because she's always in her room with her laptop.")

I prefer the term "autisms" because you have a whole range here to include Asperger's syndrome, where people can't read emotions but can manage to function quite well, gravitating into fields like computer programming where they don't have to deal with people too often. The computer genius and now magnate Bill Gates for example is said to have Asperger's.

In explaining these conditions, I would emphasize that they are not "abnormalities," that they are in fact "natural" in the sense that they happen all the time—a variation in the genes, an accident during pregnancy. I would also avoid terms like "incurable" because it emphasizes a search for "cures" and, worse, the aspect of disease. Maybe it's better to use our Filipino-Spanish term "*remedyo,*"—measures to help ease life for the person and the family having to live with a particular condition.

We need to de-emphasize the insinuations of defects and deficits in our local terms, instead pointing out examples of how people with conditions like autism and cerebral palsy can function quite well, or even excel, with some social support. I've been reading rave reviews of a new book entitled "White on Black." The writer, Ruben Gallego, fought all odds, including growing up in a Russian orphanage, with cerebral palsy.

"*Sinto-sinto,*" with its metaphors from music, might actually be a good term to use as we explain that "retuning" is possible. This retuning may not always be perfect, but we can certainly aim for a degree of tonality, of synchronization, a two-way process between the child and the family and community.

Maybe, too, we should start rebelling now when people call the Philippines the "sick man of Asia." Excuse me, let's tell them, we're just going through a "*sinto-sinto*" phase and, given time, we'll yet tune ourselves and take our place in the world.

If this lie is let to stand

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE Jan. 9 column of Conrado de Quiros. The much beleaguered columnist has once again put his finger, or rather his pen, where it hurts. As a foreigner, living for more than 15 years now in this country, I too feel the "narcotic" effect—as De Quiros put it—of the "new speak" of those ruling without legitimacy.

When discussing current affairs with my Filipino friends, I notice that the attitude toward this issue is increasingly shifting from one of initial outrage to one of annoyance. Annoyance with the topic that is.

As a German, I notice it is not unlike the reaction of my parents' generation, when confronted with the question of how such a monstrosity like the "Third Reich" was allowed to happen. The feeling of collective guilt is conveniently transformed into anger against the inquisitive party. Hence, all this nonsense ideas about the "let's forget politics and move on."

I don't know how many readers have seen the rather dark movie "Sin City." There is this scene in the hospital, where the thoroughly corrupt governor brags to Bruce Willis that he can even kill him without anyone moving a finger. He says: "When you have them agreeing to what they deep in their hearts know is wrong, then you got them by the balls."

Everyone knows that we are living a monumental lie, but almost everyone wants to look at the "bright side" of life. That's all right, but I suggest that our generation start preparing the answers for our kids, when it is their turn to ask us what we did when this happened.

I have said this before and I say it again: Nothing will ever matter in this country again, if this is let to stand. Nothing at all.

—U. BOSSE,
bosse@pldtdsl.net

SSS does not condone discourtesy to members

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE letter of Aurora Napolis. (PDI, 10/24/05) Napolis complained against the alleged discourtesy of employees manning counters 38 to 40 of the Members Assistance Center (MAC) in the Social Security System, Quezon City branch.

The SSS-MAC investigated the incident. The inquiry bore out the following:

1. We looked at the time cards of the employees who Napolis said came in late. Per their time record, the employee at counter 38 arrived at 8:02 a.m. and not 8:15 as she alleged, while the employee at counter 40 punched in at 7:59 a.m. and not 8:05. The personnel at window 39 arrived a few minutes after 8 a.m. and not 8:10 a.m.

2. The employee at counter 39 did not immediately occupy her post because she had to attend to a pensioner, who was submitting documents required under our Annual Confirmation of Pensioners (ACOP) program. The pensioner was a priority because she was among the batch of pensioners, who were instructed to come back from the previous day.

3. The employee at counter 38 started serving the pensioners at 8:02 a.m. and immediately began interviewing the second person in line. When she was about to attend to the fourth pensioner, who happened to be Napolis, a supervisor approached her to clarify some pertinent procedures on the ACOP.

The SSS does not condone any discourtesy by employees to our members. The head of MAC-QC has issued a stern directive to all employees of the branch, specifically those assigned at the ACOP lane, to report to their posts promptly after punching in. SSS-MAC has communicated this to Napolis.

The SSS management does not stop looking for ways to improve its services to members. In fact, during the past few months, the SSS has instituted amendments in the procedures with the convenience of pensioners in mind.

If a pensioner is unable to go to an SSS branch for check-up, he or she can request for a home visit by an SSS representative. Pensioners can also communicate with the SSS by responding to its letters, or by sending a certification that he or she is alive and eligible to receive pension. The certification may be issued by a regular SSS employee who has been working in the SSS for at least five years or by a teller in the bank where they have an account. The SSS even accepts confirmation from the postman or barangay chair.

The ACOP program, which was started early last year, is part of the reforms intended to ensure that pensioners get the right benefits and that the SSS can recover money erroneously sent to those who have died, remarried or recovered from their disabilities.

—JOEL P. PALACIOS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department,
Social Security System,
East Avenue, Diliman, QC

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'Criminal mediocrity'

RAUL PANGALANGAN IN HIS Jan. 6 column called attention to an insidious plot to abridge the freedom of speech. It involves the writing into the proposed constitution a provision like this: "No law shall be passed abridging the **responsible** exercise of the freedom of speech." What the heck? The author seems to be Sergio Apostol, former fiscal of Quezon City.

Let's do away with this constitutional tinkering. More evil will come out of it even if there is a chance that the "nationalist" provisions might be taken out. The least common denominator will prevail: Filipino sacristanic, criminal mediocrity.

—ROSS TIPON,
rosstipon@yahoo.com

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Days of pride and glory

THE 2005 SOUTHEAST ASIAN Games is over, but the thrill, joy, excitement and the pride it stirred in Filipino hearts linger. In SEAG, national unity stood out. Every Filipino rose to be counted. Personal and political differences were laid aside such that the SEA Games turned out to be a whopping success.

In the days of the Roman Empire, winners were awarded with a crown of laurels for every victory. Nowadays, they are awarded with gold, silver or bronze. But words of commendations should also be uttered to extol the contributions of the following:

1. The security force: police, soldiers, Marines, pilots, volunteers who kept the peace and order during the Games.

2 The competitors who gave their best.

3. All the peace- and fun-loving countrymen, from Batanes to Sulu.

4. The cheering crowd ever present to boost competitors' morale.

To each and everyone of them, I offer my imaginary "Cross of Loyalty to Country" award.

We showed to the world that competitive events like the SEAG can be fun and can promote friendship among peoples.

God so loves the Filipinos that He allowed peace to reign during the games, from start to finish.

Thank you, Father God; you let us feel you really love us.

—ROSARIO R. LIBERATO

Vets deserve share of earnings from RP property in Tokyo

LAST DECEMBER, THE INQUIRER reported that a Philippine government property in Tokyo has been leased for the sum of P240 million. (PDI, 12/8/05)

I believe the Philippine public has the right to know all the details of this government transaction. Aside from being a national patrimony, this Tokyo property was awarded to the Philippine government as part of Japan's post-war reparations for the damage it inflicted on the Filipino people during World War II.

If I remember right, the Tokyo property was declared by both the Philippine and Japanese governments as chiefly intended to benefit the nearly 500,000 USAFFE and Philippine Scout soldiers, guerrillas and guerrilla supporters (today known as World War II veterans).

Today, the number of our living World War II veterans is down to about 30,000. Most of them live in pitiable economic conditions and are not given by our government what is due them under the law. If the original intention for the use of this Japan property must be followed, then our World War II veterans justifiably deserve all or a significant portion of the national government's annual earnings from the Tokyo property.

The Office of the President, the Department of National Defense, the Department of Finance and the Department of Budget and Management should take steps to make sure our veteran-heroes get all the benefits they are entitled to under the law. For what is the use of the law if the government itself just disregards it?

—FRISCO S. SAN JUAN JR.,
national commander,
Golden Kris Fraternal Society Inc.,
(Descendants of
World War II veterans),
Tektite Tower, Ortigas Center,
Pasig City

Unsolicited paid text messages

I AM A DAILY SUBSCRIBER OF THE INQUIRer. The paper makes for good reading, especially the Saturday Super section.

But I am writing the INQUIRER because, to tell the truth, I'm tired of being harassed by the promo text messages of a mobile phone company. They just keep on coming, these unsolicited, unwanted and extremely annoying messages, such as those tasteless ringtones and faces of celebrities I don't care about.

Trouble is, every time I receive one of these tones or picture messages, my prepaid load gets P5 to P15 poorer.

I called up the company's PR department once, and the guy who answered promised to do something about it. That was many months ago, but until now the telecommunication company keeps harassing me with unwanted messages.

I thought the mobile phone companies have been prohibited from sending unsolicited promo messages, but it seems the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) is helpless, powerless and useless when it comes to unfair trade practice.

Who can I turn to for help, to stop the mobile phone company from sending me these messages? I'm not a fan of any celebrity. In fact, I do not even watch the silly talk shows on TV that discuss their personal lives. I simply do not care about celebrities. And I do not like their choice of ringtones.

I hope that through the INQUIRER this problem will be solved. It's not only me complaining about this annoying practice of mobile phone companies. My friends have also been complaining about this practice, which not only deprives me of my prepaid load but also disturbs me during meetings and interviews, and disrupts my concentration when I'm writing an article.

—MITOS S. GARCIA,
Fairview, Quezon City

Ramos and Filipinos, Clinton and Americans

IN ITS JAN. 4 ISSUE, THE INQUIRER REPORTed that former President Fidel V. Ramos, Senate President Franklin Drilon and former Sen. Vicente Sotto met on the first working day of the year, fueling speculations that they were forming an alliance.

Drilon is being eyed as "acting president" by a multisectoral group that wants to take over the Arroyo administration.

Two weeks ago, Ramos rejected as a "monumental blunder" a proposal by the Malacañang-constituted Consultative Commission to scrap the 2007 elections. Ramos threatened to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo unless she declared by New Year's Day that she was against the move.

Ramos should have just kept quiet and enjoyed his retirement from politics. His move was divisive. He can cast his "No" vote in a plebiscite, like any other citizen, on the proposed constitutional revision.

In the 2000 US presidential elections, former US President Bill Clinton just kept silent when Democrat presidential candidate Al Gore and Democrat vice presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman lost the 25 hotly contested electoral votes of Florida to Republican George W. Bush and Richard Cheney. Nationally, Gore was winning in both popular and electoral votes.

On Dec. 8, 2000, the Florida Supreme Court ordered the manual recounting of ballots in some counties known as the Democrats' strongholds. Bush's legal team appealed to the Supreme Court and sought an injunction to stop the recount.

By Dec. 12, 2000, the US Supreme Court had ruled to reverse the Florida Supreme Court. Bush and Cheney were sworn in as president and vice president respectively on Jan. 20, 2001.

The majority of the Americans said that the US Supreme Court, not the electorate, determined the outcome of the elections.

The same thing happened in the Philippines when Ms Arroyo was sworn in as President by then Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. on Jan. 20, 2001, notwithstanding that the impeachment trial of President Estrada was aborted after the prosecutors walked out of it. In spite of their dastardly act, Davide did not hold the prosecutors in contempt. This was repeated on June 30, 2004 when Ms Arroyo was once again sworn in as President—not acting—by Davide despite the pending electoral protest that Fernando Poe Jr. filed amid allegations that Ms Arroyo rigged the 2004 presidential elections.

Even though Clinton and the Americans who voted for Gore were not satisfied with the Supreme Court decision, they remained calm. There was no parliament of the streets, no rallies and demonstrations telling Bush to step down. Nobody raised the suspicion that Florida Gov. Jeb Bush was responsible for the Florida election debacle. Incidentally, Governor Jeb is the brother of George W. Bush.

—ELIGIO M. PASTORIN,
Rositaville Subdivision,
Concepcion I, Marikina City

Who's manning PCA Laguna?

THE NOV. 7, 2005 ISSUE OF THE INQUIRER carried a news item titled "Negros farmers get incentives to plant coconuts." It mentioned that "the Philippine Coconut Authority will implement a plant-now-pay-later program to encourage farmers to plant coconuts" and that under the plan, farmers would be initially provided with seedlings of early bearing dwarf coconuts. It also reported that the program was open to farmers with one-half hectare to five hectares of land.

On Nov. 9, 2005, I mailed a letter addressed to the officer in charge of the PCA at Poblacion, Alaminos, Laguna, asking him if the PCA has a similar "plant-now-pay-later" program in Laguna. I mentioned in the letter that I own a parcel of land in Sta. Cruz (Laguna) which I would want to be planted with the PCA's early bearing dwarf coconut.

It has been more than a month since then, but until now I have yet to hear from PCA Laguna or its officer in charge.

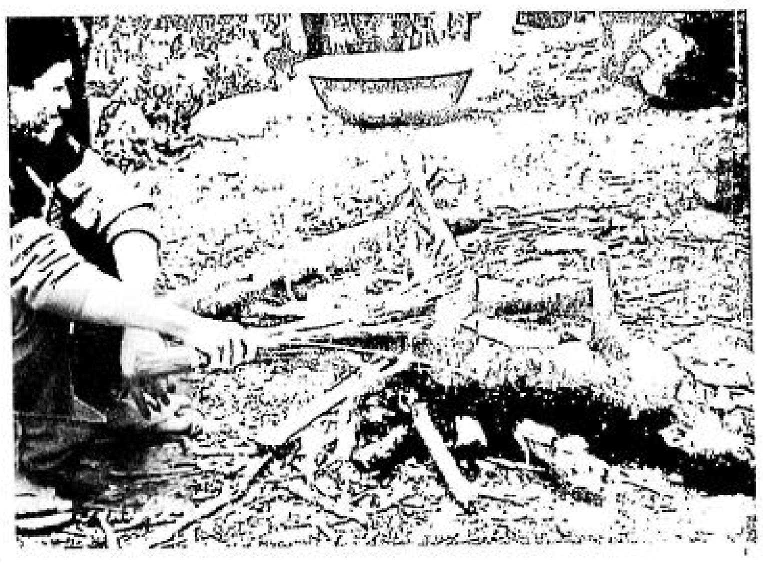
—FERNANDO TOBIAS,
3750 Sto. Angel Sur, Sta. Cruz, Laguna

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Rolando B. Fernandez**

Dog meat eating doesn't hound Cordillera natives



DOGS are sacrificial animals in the Cordillera. They are offered in rituals to protect tribe members from harm.
EV ESPIRITU

By Desiree Caluza
Sagada, Mt. Province

JACKSON BAYANG, A 36-YEAR-old native of Sagada, Mt. Province, has been eating dog meat for as long as he can remember.

While the issue of butchering dogs for food has remained contentious, Bayang said eating dog meat should not be such a sensitive topic or judged by those who do not know the culture in the Cordillera.

"It comes natural, like eating pork or chicken. It is part of our culture and there is no way this can be stopped," he said.

Former Mayor Thomas Killip of Sagada, Mt. Province, said that while American missionaries transformed local practices when they introduced Christianity to the Cordillera natives, rituals and traditional practices, like dog meat eating, had persisted.

"It may be that the American missionaries did not try to discourage or prohibit dog meat eating because they knew that it was part of our culture, diet and luxury," said Killip.

Rev. Moreno Tuguinay, former parish priest of Sagada, said rituals involving dogs had been practiced by his ancestors who were involved in tribal wars.

"Those who came back from the war had to be cleansed in a ritual called the *daw-es*. A dog had to be sacrificed to cleanse [a warrior] because he was presumed to be dirty after killing [an enemy]," said Tuguinay.

Accounts of Benguet's Kankanaey and Ibaloi peoples also had dogs as ritual animals when tribal war was rampant in parts of the mountain region.

Healing ritual

Former Vice Gov. Wasing Sacla, in his 1987 book "Treasury of Beliefs and Home Rituals," said the dog was the sacrificial animal in a healing ritual called the *tomo*.

The Kankanaey of northwest Benguet practice the *tomo* in connection with tribal wars, Sacla said. The ritual is performed to prevent the spirits of those killed in battle from haunting the survivors, he said.

"Since blood was spilled, the *tomo* was performed to cleanse or purify those who participated directly or indirectly [in the battle]. For the *tomo*, the ritual animal is the dog on the belief that it barks and, therefore, can drive away the haunting spirits," he said.

Five men are chosen to participate in the ritual. They carry bolos and spears and wear woven bamboo headgear decorated with feathers.

The *manbunong* (or *mambunong*, a native priest) first instructs the men to go on a headhunting expedition to simulate a battle. They find an imaginary enemy in the form of a fern tree. The leader thrusts his spear into the trunk while the rest cut down the branches.

'The enemy's head!'

As they slice off the bud, the men shout, "*Na-aka!*" (We got you!), followed by "Ooooy! Ooooy!" The leader pierces the fern with his spear, shouting, "*Nay di toktok di ka-ibaw tako!* (Here is the head of the enemy!)"

The *manbunong* then asks the warriors, "*Sino sa?* (Whose head is that?)." The warriors respond: "*Toktok di buso* (The head of our enemy)."

The tribal priest asks the men to lay their weapons on the ground and the sacrificial dog near the weapons. After the prayers, the warriors slit the dog's throat and its blood is gathered in a bowl. The animal is then singed, slaughtered and sliced into pieces for cooking.

While the meat is being cooked, the *manbunong* chants the *agsangey* (ritual prayer) and perform a ritual dance.

The Ibaloi, who live in the southeast part of the province, call the practice *temmo*.

In the *temmo*, Sacla said, the dog's bile was "read" for omens. If the reading is good, it is believed that the spirit has been appeased and will never haunt a person again.

The *patay* (skin) of the legs and the *altey* (liver) are roasted for another offering to the spirits. The rest of the meat is cooked in a vat.

The blood is contained in a cleaned intestine to make the *pinuneg* (blood sausage).

When everything is cooked, the meat is presented to the spirits. The warriors and other community members then partake of the food.

After the feast, the *manbunong* and the warriors sing the *angba* (ritual song) and beat metal pieces to a rhythm similar to that heard when war is forthcoming.

"Taboo is observed after performing the *temmo*. The material offerings are then placed in a corner where no man or animals may step on them," Sacla wrote.

"The *manbunong* and the warrior characters in the ritual are not allowed to sleep with their wives for the night. They have to sleep somewhere else."

In Mt. Province, the *daw-es* is performed to cleanse a person who had committed a crime.

"If somebody is sentenced, imprisoned and released, he is not allowed to enter the community until they offer a dog in the *dap-ay* (a place where Cordillera elders meet to settle disputes or discuss community issues).

"The *daw-es* is part of the cleansing of the person who is presumed to be dirty because of the guilt he has done," Tuguinay said.

Jaime Dogao, an elder from Barangay Ankileng in Sagada, said the person who is the subject of a *daw-es* was not allowed to eat the dog meat offered in the ritual. Other community members are not allowed to eat the sacrificial animal, but they can partake of dog meat that is not used in the ritual.

Only elders who perform the *daw-es* eat the offering, said Gov. Maximo Dalog. The ritual loses its effect if others eat it, he said.

Dogao said people would usually volunteer their dogs for the ritual, and it was only in recent years that sacrificial dogs were bought.

Dogs are not raised commercially in the region, he said. Most of the dogs are bought from local residents for P1,000 per animal.

Tuguinay said dog meat eating was also practiced in the Cordillera because the natives believed that the meat could warm up the body, especially during the cold season.

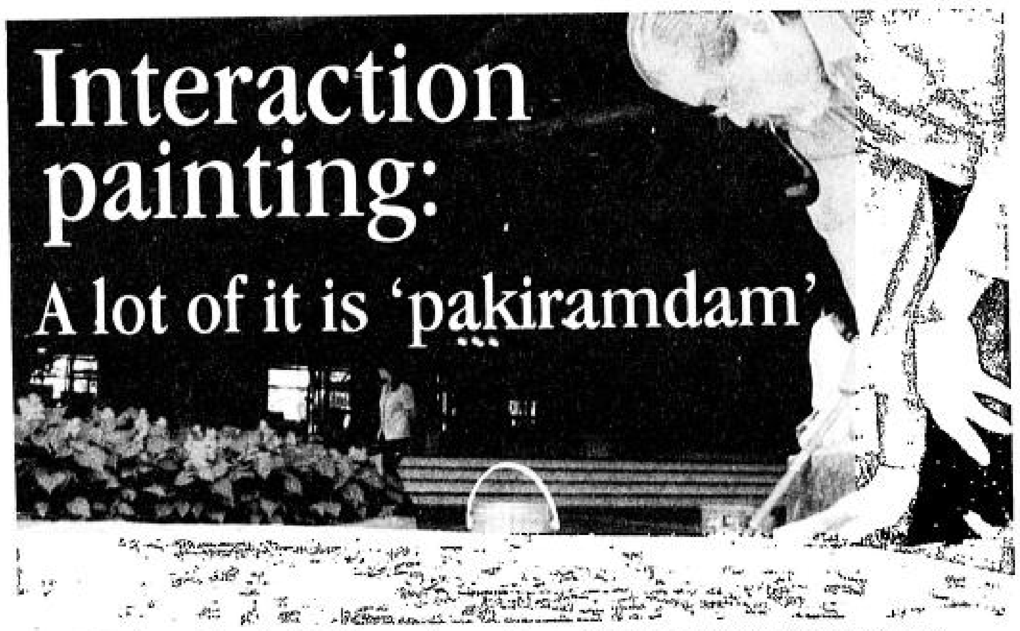
Dr. Charles Cheng, a local historian, said the Chinese who helped build the Kennon Road in the early 1900s introduced different ways of preparing dog meat dishes.

The Chinese, he said, taught the locals how to prepare *adobong aso* and a special dog soup cooked with spices and medicinal herbs brought from China.

IN THE KNOW

What the law says

REPUBLIC Act No. 8485 or the Animal Welfare Act of 1998 criminalizes the sale of dog meat, even though it provides a way out for many Cordillera communities that use dogs as ritual offerings. Section 6 allows the slaughter of dogs "when it is done as part of the religious rituals of an established religion or sect or a ritual required by tribal or ethnic custom of indigenous cultural communities."



Interaction painting: A lot of it is 'pakiramdam'

ALLAN Cosio applies the finishing touches on his work during an interaction painting at Camp John Hay.
EV ESPIRITU

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

INTERACTION PAINTING, WITH several painters working on one canvas, is like a form of play and sharing. So says painter Rafael Cusi who, with Ivi and Allan Cosio, Egay Fernandez, Tiny Nuyda, Hermes Alegre, Gig and Vincent de Pio, Gene Gonzalez and Jemina Reyes, filled up two four-feet-by-eight-feet panels at the Camp John Hay Suites in Baguio City.

The 10 make up the Blumentritt Group of Artists that started painting sessions in 1994 when Ed Soler put up the Ad Infinitum Gallery.

Cusi is challenged by interaction because it primarily requires the Filipino trait of "*pakiramdam*" or being sensitive to another's needs.

"The vibes should be good," he says. "You should understand one another. It's not just a matter of having talents and skills. You should have the same wave length or else you get extremes, someone doing abstract and another doing realistic painting in one piece."

Gig de Pio, a master portraitist, defines interaction as an occasion for artists to get together for a fellowship, an exchange of ideas and beliefs. On this social activity a true artist realizes where he/she stands.

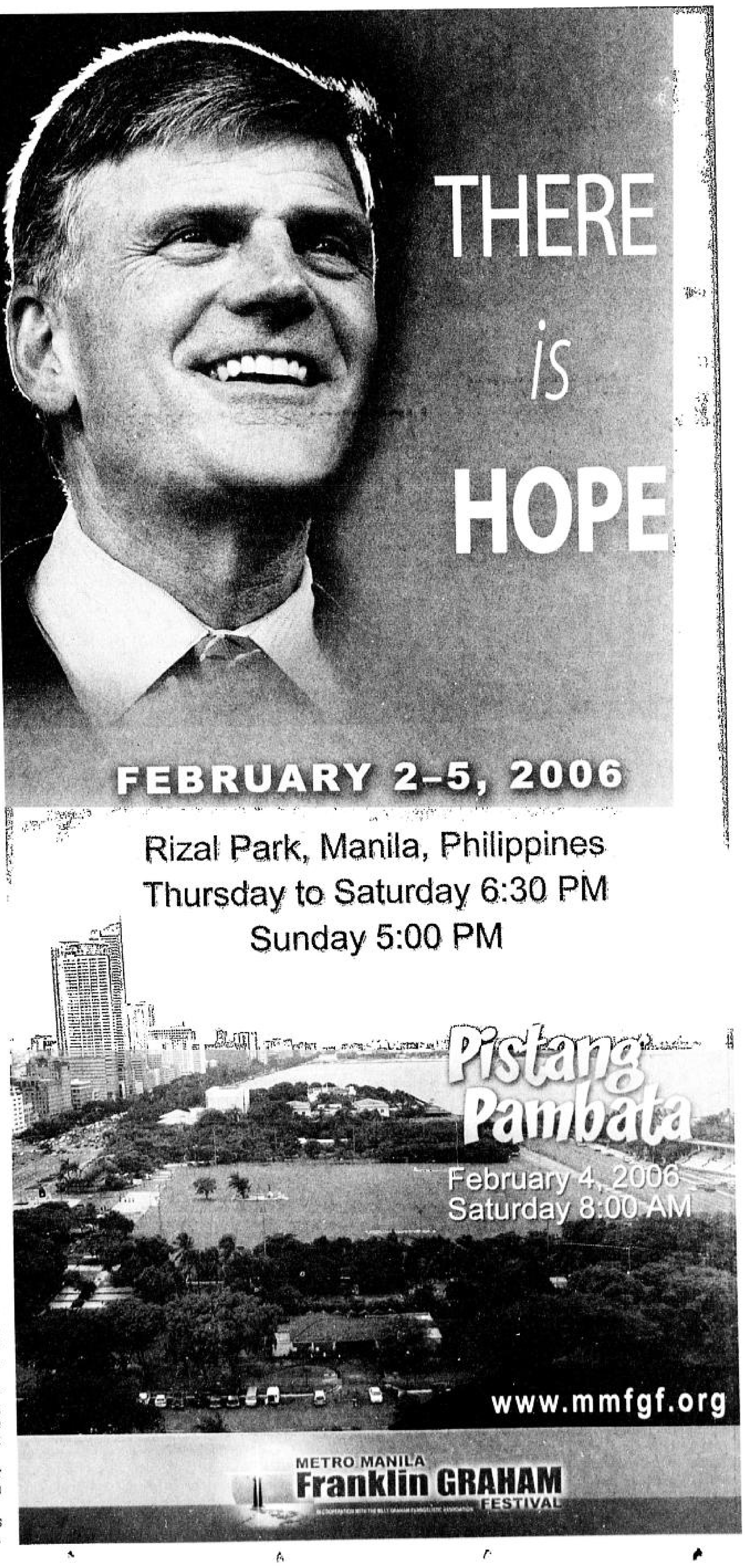
"An artist needs to know what other artists are doing either to forward his/her ideas or not to be doing what the others are already doing," he says.

He remembers the early interaction works in the 1970s of Nuyda, Alfredo Roces, Romulo Galicano, Sofronio Mendoza and the late Hernando Ocampo, Cesar Legaspi and Onib Olmedo, who comprised the Saturday Group that used to hang out at Taza de Oro in Ermita, Manila, for art talk, gossip, beer, coffee and painting together.

De Pio used to observe the interactive activities that require compromise. "They were mixing together, but their styles were identifiable like their own handwriting. They used prominent forms and symbols so they can be identifiable."

He agrees with Cusi about the need for *pakiramdam*. "Interaction is like dancing. You don't step on the toes of your partner."

Meanwhile, the Blumentritt Group continues the dynamic art form the Saturday Group started.



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Cops confirm Quezon 'jueteng' return

LUCENA CITY—POLICE IN QUEZON HAVE FINALLY admitted that the illegal numbers game "jueteng" is back in the province with a vengeance and is being operated by a certain Charing Magbuhos.

They said jueteng financiers resorted to guerrilla type operations to evade authorities.

"A few days ago, we monitored through text messages and reports of local police … the sudden rash of kangaroo or guerilla-type jueteng operations in the province," Supt. Vilmor Manzano, Quezon police chief of investigation and intelligence, admitted to the INQUIRER.

Manzano said police launched operations with local and village officials to stop jueteng.

The total collection of jueteng in Quezon during its heyday ran to close to P1 million daily.

Intelligence reports named one Charing Magbuhos as the one behind organized jueteng operations in the province.

In a guerilla-type operation, jueteng draws are held in remote places, in running vehicles and, sometimes, in a boat in the high seas, to escape arrest, police said.

"Our order to chiefs of local police stations is to immediately stop the jueteng operation under pain of immediate relief from their post under the existing strike-one policy," Manzano said.

Recent raids on suspected jueteng dens in several Quezon towns by the Camp Crame-based Anti-Illegal Gambling Special Operation Task Force yielded no arrests.

Manzano said they also received reports that EZ2 is becoming a front for jueteng.

The game mechanics of EZ2, which is run by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, is similar to jueteng as players bet on two number combinations from 1 to 31.

However, according to an insider, the renewed jueteng operation in the province is only a rundown to the introduction of the Small Town Lottery, not only in Quezon but in most areas in Southern Tagalog.

"In the coming days, there will be no more jueteng operation, guerilla or organized one. STL will be revived. As a matter of fact, some of the cabos have already herded the pool of jueteng collectors for an picture taking for their PCSO-issued identification card," the informant said.

In Naga City, five persons were arrested for collecting EZ2 bets on suspicion they were working for jueteng operators.

Senior Supt. Romeo Mapalo, police provincial director of Camarines Sur, said the bet collectors were arrested in a raid on EZ2 bookies in Barangay San Francisco in Naga.

He said the EZ2 bet collectors were known jueteng bet collectors.

Mayor Jesse Robredo, in a letter to PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao on Jan. 10, reported the resurgence of jueteng in three towns in Camarines Sur.

But the mayor of Calabanga, Camarines Sur, one of the towns mentioned by Robredo, denied the existence of jueteng.

Calabanga Mayor Evelyn Yu said it was very unusual and inappropriate for Robredo to point to her town as one of the jueteng areas in Camarines Sur.

Mapalo said he called on the PCSO to stop the operation of EZ2 because this was being used for jueteng. *Delfin Mallari Jr. and Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

2 Vizcaya cop chiefs fired over 'jueteng'

By Melvin Gascon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

SOLANO, NUEVA VIZCAYA—THE police director of Cagayan Valley ordered the immediate relief of the police director of Nueva Vizcaya following the arrest of 13 suspected "jueteng" bet collectors on Monday.

Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano, regional police director, said the relief of Senior Supt. Robert Mangaccat, provincial police director, and that of Chief Insp. Francisco Palattao Jr., local police chief, was in line with the "one strike" policy imposed on police officials by Director General Arturo Lomibao, Philippine National Police chief.

Lomibao warned police chiefs that the first confirmed presence of illegal numbers game within their areas would immediately result in their relief.

Members of the PNP's anti-illegal gambling special operations task force on Monday swooped down on a house in Barangay Wacal here, where thrice-a-day draws were supposedly being conducted.

The suspects, all men aged 20 to 56, tried to flee but were eventually arrested by policemen.

They were taken to the provincial police office where charges of violation of Republic Act 9287, or the revised anti-illegal gambling law, were filed against them.

The arrest of the suspected *cobradores* (bet collectors) came just two days after Lomibao, in a visit here on Saturday, dismissed reports that the organized illegal numbers game had been revived in the province.

Quoting a report from another task force he earlier sent here, Lomibao said the supposed jueteng activities turned out to be collections for EZ2, a government-sanctioned game. *With a report from Luigi del Puerto*

Installation of new Tanauan mayor ordered

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS has ordered the full implementation of its resolution installing Sonia Torres Aquino as the rightful mayor of Tanauan City in Batangas and ordering incumbent Mayor Alfredo Corona to vacate his post.

In its writ of execution issued Jan. 16, the poll body directed the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Batangas provincial election supervisor, Philippine National Police and other authorities to enforce its Dec. 22, 2005 resolution declaring Torres-Aquino as the true winner of the 2004 May elections.

The four-page order by the poll body's Second Division has ordered Corona "to immediately vacate the office of the Mayor of Tanauan City, Batangas and to cease and desist from discharging the powers and functions of the said office …"

According to the Dec. 22 resolution, Torres-Aquino is the rightful winner with a 3,102 vote margin over Corona after a revision of the ballots.

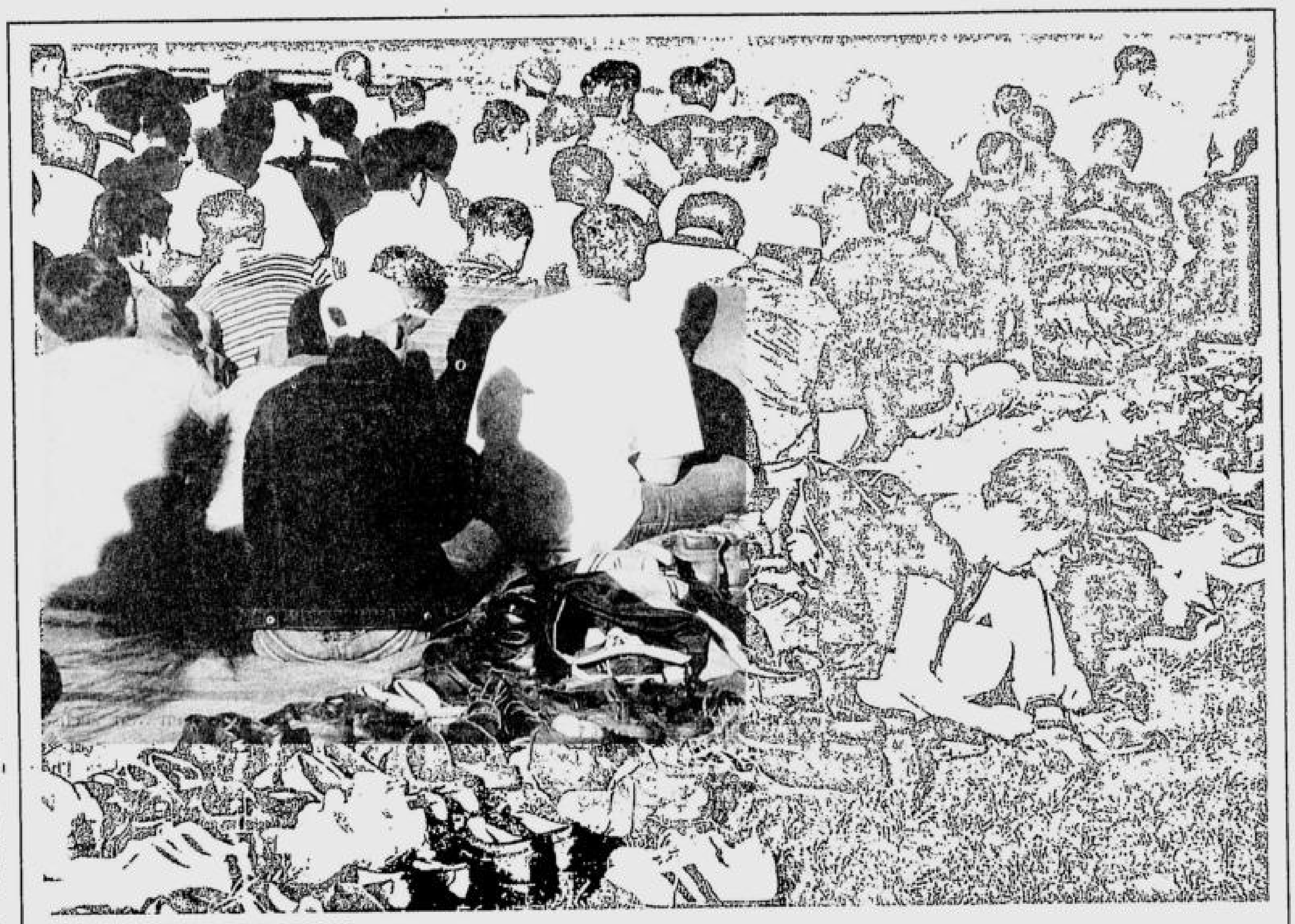
The Comelec Second Division is chaired by Commissioner Mehol K. Sadain with Commissioners Rufino Javier and Florentino Tuazon Jr. as members.

The 465-page resolution found defective the results of the City Board of Canvassers' count declaring Corona winner with 31,942 votes against Aquino's 28,201 votes or a supposed lead of 3,741 votes.

An election protest filed by Aquino on May 20, 2004 alleged fraud in the balloting and led to a recount and appreciation of ballots from the 342 precincts of the 26 barangays of Tanauan City conducted by the Comelec.

Last Jan. 8, more than 700 supporters of the embattled Corona held a vigil at the City Hall grounds and assailed the Comelec resolution as a farce.

The protesters, led by the Kalipunan ng mga Tanaueño Para sa tunay na Tinig ng Tao (Katapat), accused election officials and Torres-Aquino of connivance in reversing the results of the last elections.
Gina Rodriguez, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



CELEBRATING ABRAHAM
Muslim migrants of Baguio convene in their finest garments on Tuesday at Burnham Park to celebrate the annual Feast of Sacrifice, a commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice of Ismael to God, which reveals the roots Islam shares with Christianity. The children received gifts after a morning ritual of sermons on the last month of the Muslim calendar. EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

21 Negros mayors face raps for open dumps

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—TWENTY-one city and municipal mayors in Negros Oriental face administrative charges for their failure to build sanitary landfills as mandated by Republic Act (RA) 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Central Visayas regional office (DENR 7) sent letters to the mayors in mid-December directing them to comply with RA 9003 or face charges and the closure of their open dumps, said Charlie Fabre, the Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer of Dumaguete.

Fabre said under RA 9003, which took effect in 2001, all local government units (LGUs) in the country only have three years within which to convert their open dumps into controlled ones.

All LGUS were mandated to establish a sanitary landfill on or before Jan. 26, 2006. Failure by LGUs to comply with the law would also mean that local chief executives and DENR personnel face administrative sanctions, Fabre said.

The LGUs that were directed to comply with RA 9003 were the cities of Dumaguete and Tanjay and the towns of Basay, Sta. Catalina, Siaton, Zamboanguita, Dauin, Bacong, Valencia, Sibulan, Amlan, Pamplona, Mabinay, Manjuyod, Bindoy, Ayungon, Tayasan, Jimalalud, La Libertad, Guihulngan and Vallehermoso.

In Negros Oriental, only the cities of Bais, Canlaon and Bayawan and the town of San Jose have sanitary landfills, said Mario Aragon, the regional environmental management specialist of DENR.

Aragon said LGUs are required to use facilities and equipment that effectively disposes of garbage. They are also required to separate solid from liquid wastes.

Aragon and Fabre agreed it would not be easy to build sanitary landfills because of financial constraints, as a sanitary landfill could cost at least P50 million.

Fabre said he would call a meeting with the mayors to find ways how to finance the landfills.

ROUNDUP

'Balikbayans' build homes

GANYAN ANG PINOY-
MAPAGKAWANG GAWA!
MARAMING SALAMAT!

SANTIAGO CITY—Twelve Seattle-based Filipinos joined some 100 volunteers in building homes for poor families at Sitio Gunot in Barangay Rizal here as part of Gawad Kalinga Foundation's project. Mayor Amelita Navarro said the *balikbayans* stayed here for a week not only to help in the construction but also to prepare gardens for homeless residents. They also pledged to finance the construction of two houses in the village.
Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Village official slain

BAMBANG, Nueva Vizcaya—A village official here was killed Sunday allegedly by a relative after an argument near the town cemetery in Barangay Buag here. Roman Anlag, 52, village councilor of Barangay Magsaysay Hill, was shot and killed allegedly by a cousin identified as Butch Anlag. Witnesses said the two had a fist fight after which the suspect drew his gun and shot the victim.
Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Koreans in English camp

PUERTO GALERA, Oriental Mindoro—The Sandbar resort has become a favorite among Koreans because of its scenery and good security, said Donald Cañete, organizer of the English camp in the resort. Koreans come here for English classes during winter (Jan. 1 to Feb. 8) and in summer. The Philippines serves as a teaching ground for basic English skills, added Cañete.
Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Missing teacher found dead

CALAUAN, Laguna—The remains of a missing female teacher was found here on Wednesday. Eloisa C. Claridad, 28, and a teacher of the Our Lady of the Abandoned Catholic School in Poblacion in Muntinlupa City, was identified through her remains and belongings that were discovered in a barangay in this town. A report submitted to Laguna provincial police director Senior Supt. Federico N. Terte said the victim's father, Ernesto Claridad, had told police that his daughter had been missing since Oct. 18 last year.
Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Windsurfing competition

PAANO BA PUMUNTA
SA PUERTO GALERA ?

PUERTO GALERA, Oriental Mindoro—The Puerto Galera Tourism Sector Coordinating Association (Tosca), in coordination with the Philippine Board Sailing Association has announced the opening of the Puerto Galera Windsurfing Open on Feb. 23-25 at the Puerto Galera Bay. The competition is the first in this tourist town and aims at environmental preservation, sustainable tourism and training of athletes, said Carmelo Garcia, Tosca president and a national winner in windsurfing. For details, contact 09175620124 or (043) 287-3344
Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cordillera dump of pesticides, says doc

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE Cordillera's vegetable farms have become a dumping ground of chemical-based farm inputs and unless conventional farming practices are changed, these chemicals will continue to threaten the environment and farmers' health, a doctor here said.

"In Benguet alone, diseases among farmers have been observed to have a direct relation to the frequent use of commercial pesticides and insecticides," said Dr. Charles Cheng, director of the Baguio-Filipino Chinese Hospital in Baguio City.

Cheng said his clinical studies have shown high incidence of cancer, asthma, skin diseases and allergy among farmers.

He presented these findings to farmers who attended the First Cordillera Organic Agriculture Congress at the Benguet State University on Friday.

Cheng, who has devoted part of his medical practice on researching the ill effects of chemical spray on vegetable farms, was a lifetime awardee of the Dr. Jose Rizal Award for Excellence in Medicine and Community Service.

He said the Cordillera has the second highest incidence of blindness in the country and this could be due to exposure to too much chemicals sprayed in the farms.

He said the sale of commercial farm inputs has become a "multibillion [peso] industry" since farmers have become the "willing consumers."

Quoting figures from the Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority, Cheng said Benguet farmers alone spent P28 million for chemicals in 1983.

"This increased to P165 million in 1994 and as of 2005, they now spend P500,000 a month on these synthetic farm inputs," he said.

He assailed multinational companies manufacturing the chemicals, saying "most of them prefer to make money than care for the health of farmers."

Cheng said farmers will save up to P2 million a month if they would stop using too much chemicals.

The health of farmers is not the only one in danger but also the region's rivers that could be contaminated by excessive pesticide use in the farms, he said.

"The region is basically mountainous. Chemicals used in the uplands could go down to the major rivers and this could trigger a major environmental problem," he said.

The province produces more than 80 percent of Metro Manila's supply of vegetables. More than 200,000 farmers are engaged in agriculture in the province's vegetable belt.

Cheng welcomed government efforts to encourage farmers to shift from conventional farming to organic farming.

TV reporter loses phone; finds it in shopping mall

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

A TELEVISION REPORTER WHO LOST HER cell phone to a robber in Pasig City last Saturday found it after a few hours—in a shopping mall where it was being offered for sale.

But her story doesn't end there.

When she confronted the owner of the store, he offered her another cell phone, which she later found out was the same one that had been stolen from her co-worker.

Surprise, surprise

Theresa Andrada, a reporter for ABC-5, told the police that a robber took her cell phone, an XDA-II PDA, in Pasig City early Saturday morning.

When she went around the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan to look for a replacement hours later, she was surprised to see her own phone—which she recognized through its serial number—displayed in one of the stalls.

Andrada confronted the stall owner who, in an effort to assuage her, offered her another cell phone of the same model at a lower price.

A check of the phone's serial number, however, showed that it was the same one a fellow ABC-5 reporter, Jason Torres, had earlier lost to another robber.

Sought for comment yesterday, Andrada refused to speak about the case, saying the incident was a "private matter."

The police, meanwhile, said the incident was "an isolated case" despite persistent rumors of stolen phones rampantly being sold in the busy shopping area.

San Juan Police chief Supt. Rodelio Jocson told the INQUIRER that he and his men, in cooperation with mall executives, have been implementing safety measures at the shopping center to prevent the sale of stolen goods.

Proof of ownership

"We have been asking the stall owners to ask for proof of ownership from people who will trade in their old phones," Jocson said.

But again, it is possible that robbers could be faking documents as well, victimizing unsuspecting stall owners, he added.

As of yesterday, Andrada had not yet filed a formal complaint against the stall owner.

Russian envoy's death still a mystery

By Tarra V. Quismundo

HOW A RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT drowned in a pool inside a Makati condominium Sunday night remained unanswered yesterday as the police continued their investigation into his death.

"We have to determine if there were any untoward incidents prior to the discovery of the body... that will lead us to conclude that it was not an accident," said Makati Police Department Homicide chief, Senior Insp. Gary Reyes.

At around 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, the body of Gurgen Albertovich Balayan, a 22-year-old protocol officer, was found floating in a swimming pool inside the Makati Tuscany Condominium on Fonda Street corner Ayala Avenue in Makati City, where he had been staying.

Balayan was rushed to the Makati Medical Center, but was declared dead on arrival at 7:45 p.m.

An autopsy conducted by the regional crime laboratory of the Southern Police District Scene-of-the-Crime Operatives showed that Balayan died of drowning, Reyes told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The police, however, have yet to determine whether Balayan drowned by accident or if there was foul play involved.

A laceration was found on the victim's head, indicating that he may have hit or was hit on the head.

"We are waiting for the review of the CCTV (closed-circuit television) tapes [containing video] taken of the pool area," said Reyes.

A SHOEMAKER in Marikina City works cheerfully, despite the problems that ail the shoe business which once earned the city the title "Shoe Capital of the Philippines."
ROGER CARPIO

Shoemakers struggling to get back on feet

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SEARCHING FOR HOPE AMID DOUBT, A family of shoemakers in Marikina City is struggling to hold onto a local tradition, which has bridged several generations, but is now ailing.

His eyesight clear and his hands steady at age 60, Pepito is still into shoemaking.

Replacing the compound where he used to employ almost a hundred shoe makers three decades ago is a small storage room in Barangay Sto. Niño. With its rusty roof supported by a ceiling worn out by termites, this is where he and his two remaining workers, composed of his wife and sister, work.

The glorious days of his once brisk business, delivering thousands of pairs of leather shoes to famous department stores every week, is now slowly fading from his memory, replaced by thoughts of what went wrong, trying to make ends meet by selling synthetic shoes to small stalls selling garments for policemen beside Camp Crame in Quezon City.

Pepito and his 36-year-old son Edgar, who also started his own shoemaking business when he got married, know the answers.

But they are powerless to do anything, aside from standing by the only profession they know, the job that made it possible for Pepito to send all of his four children to college.

"I will make shoes as long as I live. I will die in this profession," he said, speaking inside his dimly lit storage room full of unused rubber soles.

Edgar lives on Shoe Avenue, which residents used to call Daang Bakal. The narrow alley, which runs for about three kilometers, used to be the center of shoemaking in the city.

The street used to be lined with two-story houses on both sides, with shoemakers busy working on the lower floors.

"From afar, you would hear the sound of hammers and sewing machines. You could walk on this alley with your eyes closed and if you opened your eyes any time, you would most likely see people making shoes," shoemaker Joel Gaudia, 40, also recalled.

Because of this 118-year-old tradition, Marikina City was dubbed the Shoe Capital of the Philippines.

Some, however, have started calling shoemaking in Marikina City a "sunset industry." Gaudia, who recently stopped operating his 20-year-old shoemaking business, flatly describes it as a "dying industry."

Only a few backyard shops remain on the once famous alley. The rest have been replaced by sari-sari stores.

Pepito and Edgar, just like Gaudia and their group Samahan ng Magsasapatos sa Pilipinas, are blaming the invasion of imported shoes, particularly those pouring in from China.

"Before, people here no longer had enough time to sleep, especially during peak months, because we were all busy making shoes. We were very happy," Edgar said.

"Now, most of us here just waste our time sleeping. We have nothing to do," he added.

He himself had temporarily stopped making shoes for a logical reason: there were no orders.

"We are losing our buyers to cheaper imported goods," Gaudia said, blaming the very low tariffs on imported shoes, an offshoot of the country's membership in the World Trade Organization.

Figures from his group say that imported shoes invading the local market swelled from only 28 million pairs in 1997 to 60 million pairs in 2002.

Because of the agreement, imported shoes became cheaper than locally produced shoes. Manufacturing shoes abroad and bringing them here became more profitable than putting up a factory and employing local shoemakers.

From the more than 2,000 registered shoe makers in the city in 1994, according to Gaudia, only 237 remain, according to the City Business Permits and Licensing Office.

"We cannot match the prices of imported shoes, especially because prices of raw materials here are also shooting up," Edgar added.

For Gaudia, it is the pain of seeing thousands of workers losing hope and their future that is keeping him and their group holding on.

"This is not just about shoemakers. The footwear industry is closely linked to several other industries," he explained.

The struggle will be long and difficult, they admit. But hopefully, they have made the first few steps—their Marikina-made shoes still firmly on their feet.

Lim: Jaylo's case sets dangerous precedent

By Leila B. Salaverria
and Jerome Aning

SENATOR AND FORMER MANILA policeman Alfredo Lim has expressed concern over the situation of his former colleague, Reynaldo Jaylo, who has become a wanted man.

Jaylo, an ex-policeman and the former head of the defunct Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force (PAIRTF), has been ordered arrested in connection with the serious illegal detention charges filed against him for conducting operations even after the dissolution of his agency.

The charges were filed after Jaylo and his men were accused of arresting alleged illegal recruiters without a mandate. They were also suspected of demanding money from their victims in exchange for their release.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has called on the former PAIRTF chief to turn himself in and face the charges against him.

"This is a dangerous precedent. If all the inmates execute an affidavit claiming that those who arrested them had demanded money, would the DOJ recognize this?" Lim said.

Meanwhile, the government will form a new body to replace the PAIRTF which will deal with other problems such as human trafficking, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) chief Rosalinda Baldoz said yesterday.

Baldoz told reporters she was just waiting for the DOJ's go-signal for the creation of the task force, which would be composed of representatives from various government offices.

"We're just awaiting the recommendation from the DOJ regarding the composition of the new team, which we hope (will) start (operating) early this year," she said.

Baldoz said she expected the new team, which would be under the POEA, to be more powerful and effective than the PAIRTF as it would have immigration and police officers as members.

No visits to the dentist for Roldan, says judge

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

NO SWEET SMILE FOR ACTOR and former Quezon City congressman Dennis Roldan this time.

The Pasig City Regional Trial Court yesterday denied a motion filed by Roldan's lawyer that he be allowed to visit his personal dentist "as often as needed."

The former actor-congressman has been accused of masterminding the kidnapping of a 3-year-old Chinese-Filipino boy in February 2005. His group allegedly demanded at least P250 million in ransom at the start of the negotiations.

In his motion filed last month, Roldan asked the court to allow him to visit his personal dentist, who has a clinic in Timog Avenue, Quezon City.

Roldan is detained at the Pasig City Jail along with his five co-accused.

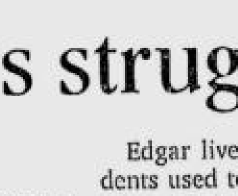
But the prosecution opposed the motion, saying the request "was too much to ask (for a) prisoner like him."

Finding merits in the prosecution's arguments, Judge Agnes Reyes-Carpio denied Roldan's motion yesterday.

"There being no showing that the resident dentist of the Pasig City Jail is not competent to attend to (Roldan's) dental problems as often as needed, there is no imperative necessity for him to visit his personal dentist," Carpio added in her order.

METROBRIEFS

Parañaque sides with MMDA



ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

UNLIKE Makati City, Parañaque City feels more kindly toward the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA). Parañaque Mayor Florencio Bernabe told the INQUIRER that he has asked the agency to continue its traffic management duties in the city, at least for now. As soon as the city has hired and trained additional traffic enforcers, they will take over from the MMDA the management of traffic flow in major thoroughfares like the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Road, Baclaran, Sucat Road and the Bicutan Interchange. For now, MMDA traffic enforcers would be allowed to apprehend and issue Traffic Violation Receipts to erring motorists in the city, Bernabe said.

Jocelyn R. Uy

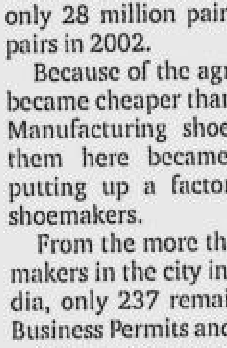
Theft suspect arrested

THE MALABON City police have arrested a suspected member of a motorcycle theft gang operating in the city. In a report filed by PO2 Ananias Birad, officer on case, the suspect identified as J-ar Bartolome 21, of Longos, Malabon City, was arrested at dawn yesterday along F. Sevilla Street, near the city's police headquarters. Birad, however, did not give additional details of Bartolome's arrest to avoid tipping off other members of the syndicate. The suspect's arrest was carried out following several weeks of surveillance and based on information given by the gang's victims

Nancy C. Carvajal

Teenagers rob teacher

A HIGH school teacher got the shock of her life when she found herself being robbed by two boys no older than her own students the other night in Quezon City. Marjorie Agbayani, 27, of Tatalon, Quezon City, was walking on the pedestrian overpass on Commonwealth Avenue near Ever Gotesco Mall when she was stopped by two boys at 9:30 p.m. Monday, the police said. At knifepoint, the boys, both 13, asked for her cell phone, said SPO1 Melchor Bernalte of the Batasan Hills police. When the victim handed over her phone, a Nokia 3315, the suspects fled, he added. Agbayani quickly informed the Batasan Hills police, who managed to catch the suspects minutes later. The phone, however, was not recovered. The boys will be turned over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.



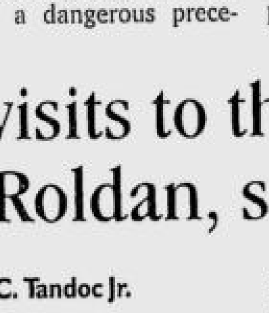
DJ Yap

Vagrants rounded up

THE MANILA Police District (MPD) has vowed to intensify its crackdown on vagrants and street families as part of its "At Yur Serbis: Pulis na Mabilis, Opis na Malinis" program. "The presence of street families leads to higher crime rates in the city," MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong said in a phone interview. Bulaong added that they have turned over some children and families living on the streets to the Manila Social Welfare Department "to ensure that they keep off the streets permanently." With its cleanliness and quick response program, "At Yur Serbis: Pulis na Mabilis, Opis na Malinis," Bulaong hopes to restore order within the vicinity of the city's police stations and precincts. "It has been a common observation that traffic jams and garbage mounds abound in areas surrounding the police stations and precincts," Bulaong said in an earlier interview. "This project is actually an answer to the earlier challenge of Mayor Lito Atienza's wife, Beng, who once said that if someone sees terrible traffic with different obstructions and garbage all over the streets, he or she is near a Manila police station," Bulaong explained, adding that the observation resulted in the conceptualization of the program. The police chief said that vendors and public utility vehicle drivers stay near the precincts because of the sense of security the policemen provide. Bulaong also created a special team headed by Police Community Relations officer Supt. Eddie Perez to regularly inspect the police stations and precincts.

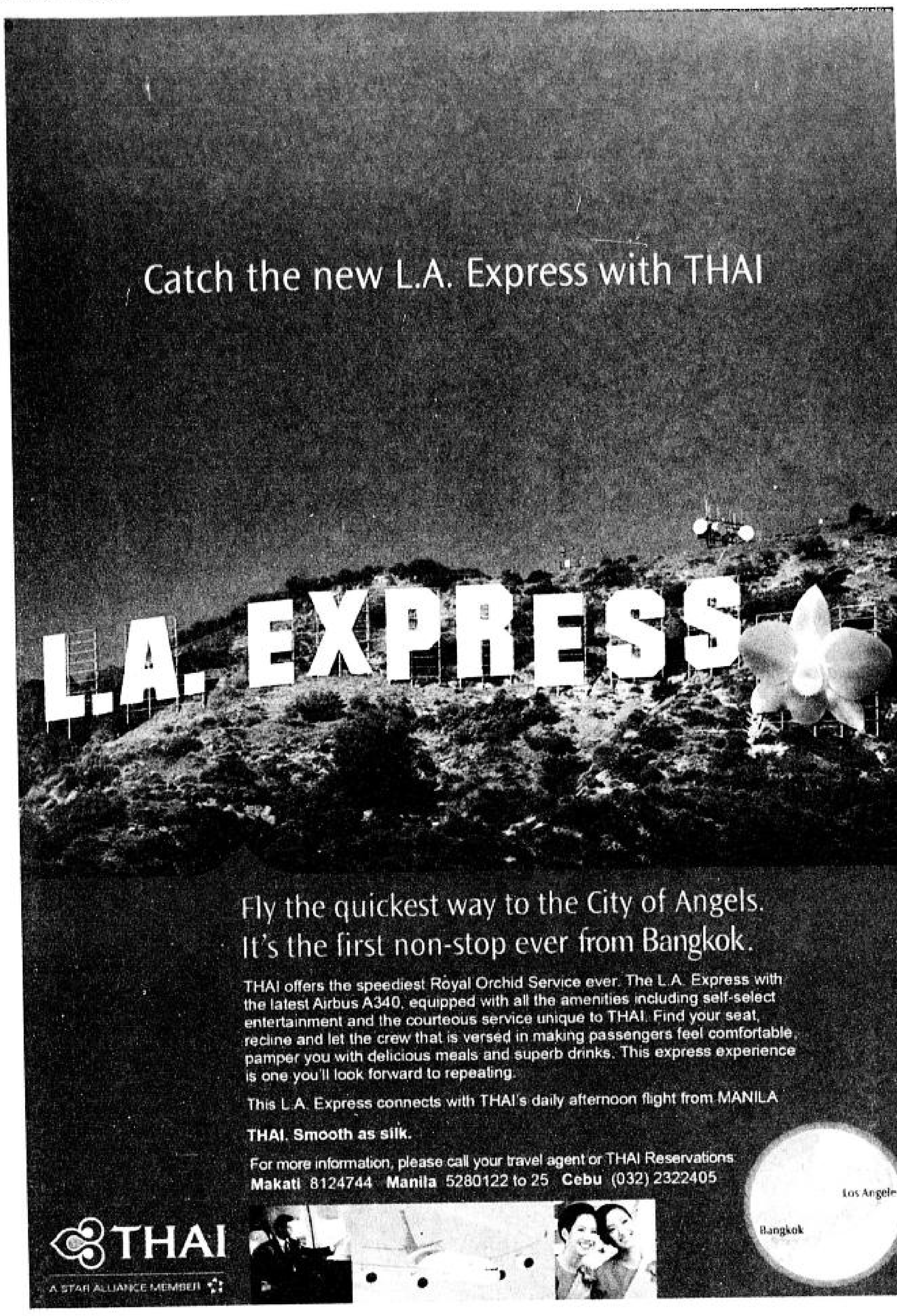
Margaux C. Ortiz

No reservations


O, AYAN HA - PARK ANYWHERE DAW HA!
Ooo

PUT away those signs in parking areas which say "reserved for customers." A Quezon City councilor has reminded owners of establishments in the city that it is unlawful for them to place reserved signs in public areas which they have turned into parking spaces in the city. An ordinance passed last year declares that these areas technically belong to the city government, and can thus be freely used by the public, according to Councilor Bernadette Herrera-Dy. Ordinance 1465 prohibits security guards from driving away individuals who have parked in front of an establishment even if they are not customers. Herrera-Dy, however, clarified that the local law does not cover private areas specifically used for parking, such as those in malls. She said mall parking spaces belong to the company and are considered private property.

DJ Yap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Editor **Ester G. Dipasupil**

THE TUBA-TUBA PLANT: Lovely to look at but dangerous to eat. WWW.HEAR.ORG.

14 children hospitalized for eating 'tuba-tuba' seeds

By Tina G. Santos

FOURTEEN CHILDREN IN TONDO, MANILA, were hospitalized on Monday after eating the seeds of the "tuba-tuba" (scientific name *Jatropha curcas*) plant.

The victims, with ages ranging from 5 to 13 years old, were taken to the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center in Sta. Cruz, Manila, after complaining of vomiting and dizziness.

Dr. Eduardo Serrano, head of the Preventable Diseases Division of the Manila City Health Office, said the children were in stable condition and were set to be discharged last night. Serrano said the children told him that they were walking around their neighborhood in Vitas, Tondo, at around 3 p.m. Monday when one of them spotted the tuba-tuba plant with its green fruits.

One boy picked the fruits and ate the seeds, Serrano said. When he told his companions that the seeds were delicious, they followed his lead, he added. But after 30 minutes, Serrano said some of the children started vomiting while the others complained of dizziness. Alarmed, their parents brought them to the hospital.

Serrano warned other children not to eat the fruit of the tuba-tuba plant, which belongs to the coconut family.

According to health officials, the seeds of the plant contain toxic substances that can affect the liver and even the heart. Just eating one seed can cause abdominal pains, dizziness and diarrhea.

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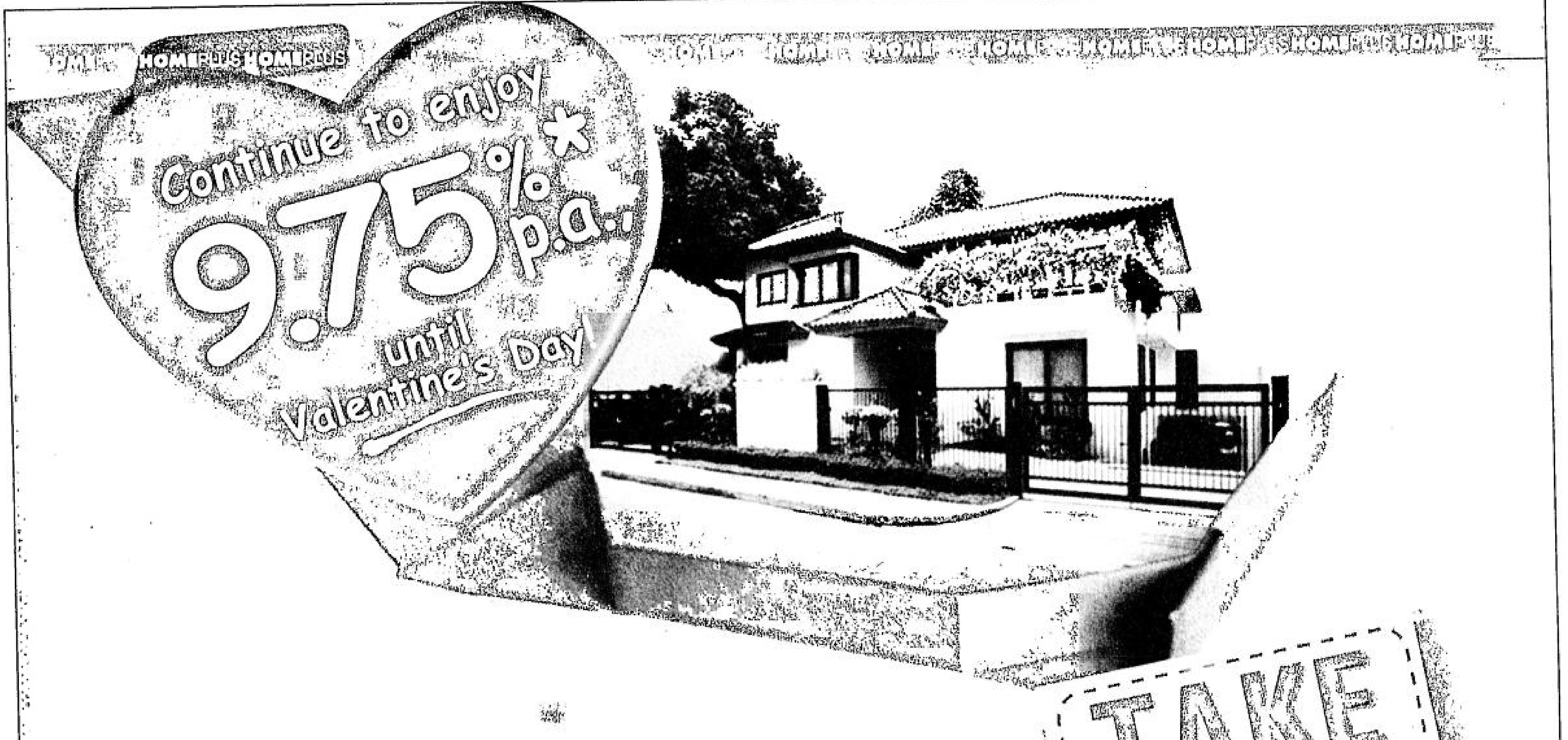
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Win-bound Pacquiao unveiled

Filipino hero delights fans in open sparring ahead of Las Vegas journey

By Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—MANNY PACquiao's final workout here was opened to the public and what loomed was a skilled, vicious fighter who appeared only a knockout win shy of becoming a boxing masterpiece.

The unveiling of Pacquiao, whose training sessions had been scheduled behind closed doors, was totally unscheduled.

Trainer Freddie Roach had to give in to a sparring regimen in the morning, before a big crowd at Wild Card, so they could motor to Las Vegas in the afternoon.

Pacquiao was a true delight.

It was not exactly a new Manny Pacquiao who awed spectators with newfound skills and techniques.

But the Pacquiao they saw was a far cry from the confused, overeager slugger who lost to Erik Morales in a bloody, dramatic showdown last March.

Pacquiao yesterday was polished, strong, sure, if a little fancy.

He did a Muhammad Ali, aped Sugar Ray Leonard, and banged at his sparmate with ferocity reminiscent of Roberto Duran.

Roach said Pacquiao now has power in both hands. But the problem, he said, was that Pacquiao played to the big crowd.

"He wants to thrill," Roach said. "But you see him at his best on Saturday."

The transformation notwithstanding, Roach said Pacquiao will have to surpass himself in the rematch with Morales.

"Morales will surely bring in his best game, he's a tough guy, but we're ready for him," Roach said.

Pacquiao did not have to be told that yesterday's show was purely a rehearsal.

To hit the greatest jackpot of his career, he has to be as good as he was yesterday inside the ring on Saturday.

Pacquiao is being paid $2 million to fight Morales again, but his expenses are mounting. He has already set aside $40,000 for tickets to be distributed to those who had placed early requests.

Add to that the growing list of those whom he had to provide plane tickets for, from Manila to here and back.

There's an easy way for Pacquiao to recover, or even gain on, his expenses, however.

That is, if Morales, who's being paid $3 million, checks in for the fight over the 130-lb limit.

As mandated by the Nevada State Boxing Commission, each excess pound would cost Morales a $250,000 in penalty, which would then be given to Pacquiao.

More than that, it would mean that the taller Morales, a three-time world champion, had to deprive himself of proper nutrients as fight day nears to make the weight limit.

According to Pacquiao, Morales at 29 years old would find it doubly harder to trim down to 130 lbs.

LEANER but meaner, Manny Pacquiao jumps in glee as he finishes his final workout Saturday at the Wild Card gym of his trainer Freddie Roach in Los Angeles, California . Note the elbow pad on Pacquiao's left arm. DAN TRINIDAD

Hingis, Federer through

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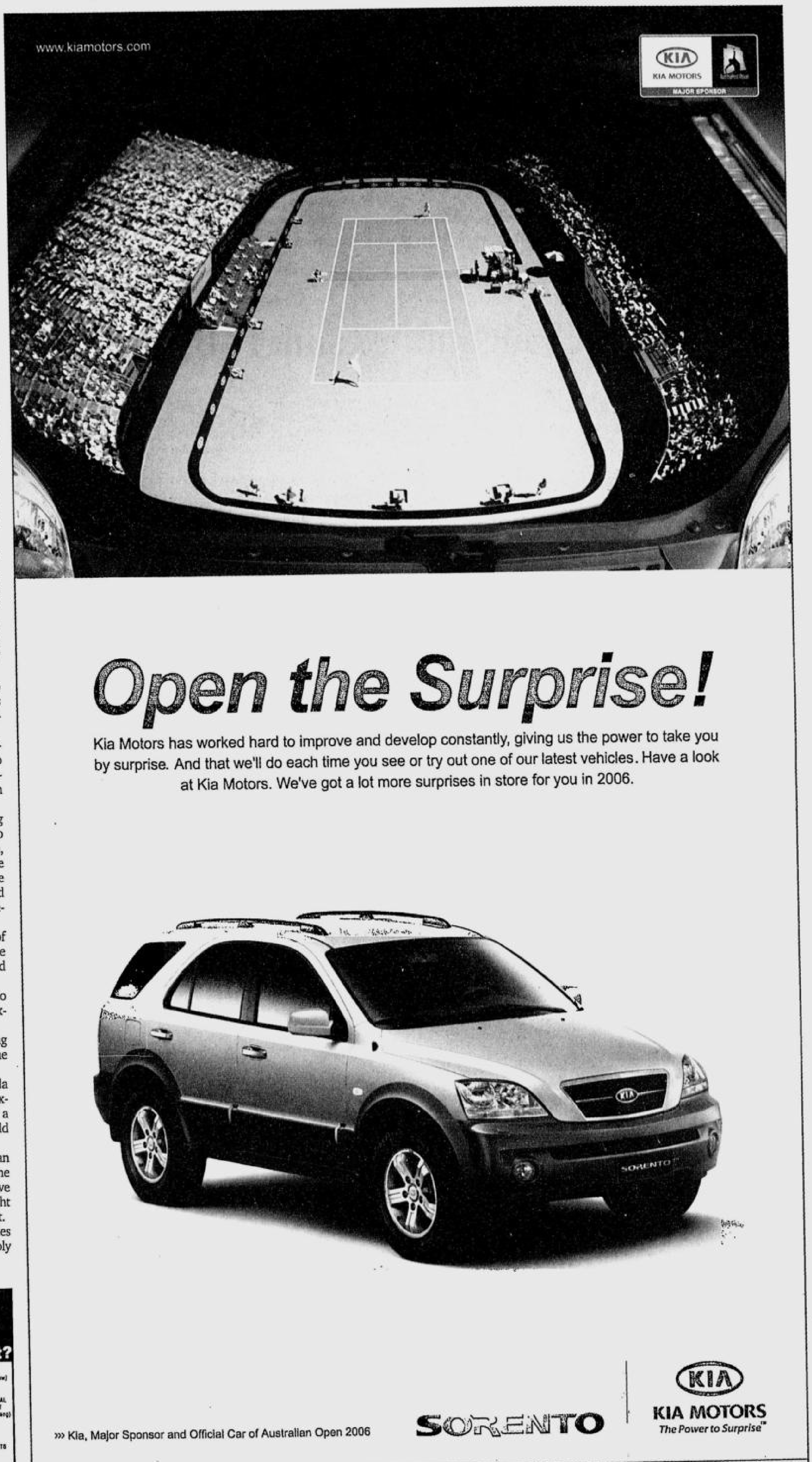
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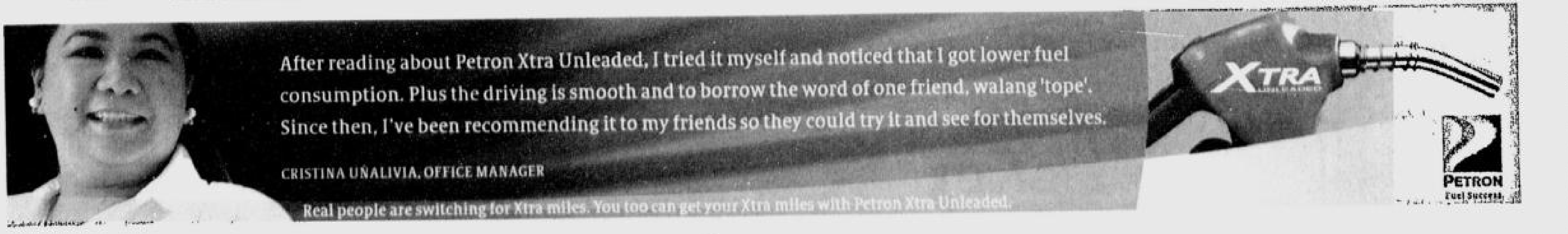
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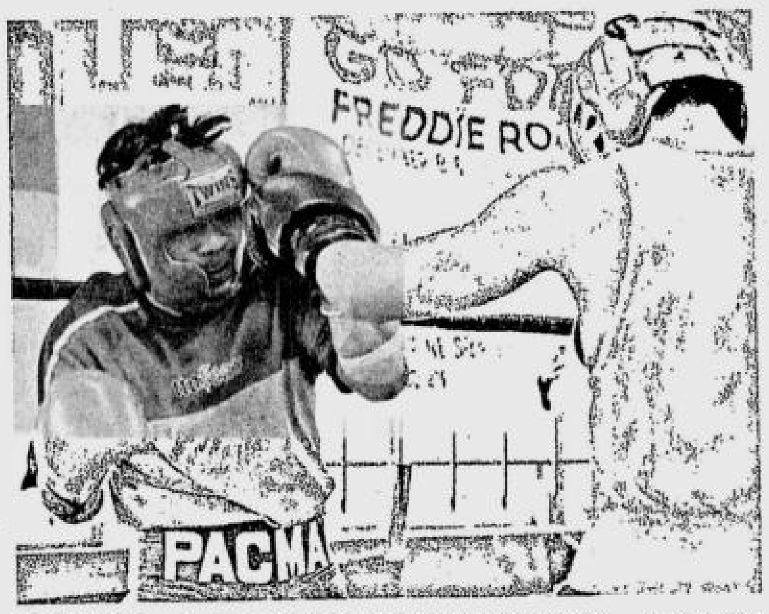
Pacquiao tries his luck in new Las Vegas venue

By Recah Trinidad



PACQUIAO exchanges sharp punches with a sparmate. DAN TRINIDAD

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—Manny Pacquiao, frustrated in two previous bids at MGM Grand here, tries to hit his career's biggest jackpot in a new arena on Saturday (Sunday morning in Manila).

Pacquiao rode in his gray P6.5 million Porsche sports car with wife Jinkee and ally Rex "Wakee" Salud to this glittering gambling capital where he was welcomed with balloons and cheers by the Filipino staff of the fabulous Wynn's Las Vegas, built along the world-famous Stip eight months ago.

Unlike in his past two major fights here, there was no giant billboard announcing Pacquiao's Jan. 21 rematch with Erik Morales along the special highway leading to the heart of Las Vegas and its spellbinding cluster of hotel-casinos.

But when he entered the hotel lobby, Pacquiao was told what his presence was all about.

The first battle was an epic, announced the framed annoucement at the lobby of Wynn's, a 2,700-room wonder that boasts a golf course in its vast compound.

Morales arrives at this gambling mecca Tuesday in a private jet in time for the press conference on Wednesday.

The weigh-in is scheduled Friday and Morales could be expected to check in pale and wan after struggling with excess poundage.

Pacquiao is expected to breeze through the scales.

However, the Pinoy idol, who showed up with a taped forearm for his final sparring yesterday, will have to do something drastic, short of cutting the ropes, in order to free himself of the technical barriers to be erected by Morales inside the fight ring.

Morales can be expected to show up for the fight fully recharged after reporting like a tubercular for the weigh-in in the first encounter.

RP champ Dondon Sultan mixes it up with Cesar Yarte during their title fight at the Gaisano Mall in Cebu City over the weekend.

Sultan retains RP title; Catubay wins

CEBU CITY—RP WELTERWEIGHT boss Dondon "Supremo" Sultan impressively retained his national title after he halted challenger Cesar Yarte in the seventh round of their bout Sunday night in the main event of a Sinulog card at the Gaisano Countrymall parking area.

Sultan knocked out challenger Cesar Yarte in 1:35 of the seventh round to retain to retain his welterweight title, while Federico "Magnifico" Catubay captured the flyweight crown with a close but unanimous decision victory over Louie Bantigue in a pair of thrilling matches presented by Hope in cooperation with Jemah Television, Viva Sports, Outlast, Air Philippines, dzRH, dzSR, Sun Star and the Journal Group of Publications.

Sultan stopped his foe with 1:35 left in the seventh in the bout promoted by Sammy Gello-ani.

In the other bouts, Robert "Cliff Smart" Allanic scored knockdowns in the second and fourth en route to a unanimous decision win over a tough Nonoy Devilleres.

In the other bouts, Donnie Nietes scored a lop-sided beating on Noel Veronque, 60-54 in all three judges; Rey Caitom TKO's JR Llanasa at the 1:15 mark of the 2nd round; AJ Banal also TKO'd Rodel Veronque at 2:56 of the 5th; Sherwin Paro decisioned War Bartiquel; Pedro Malco KO'd Ricky Escaner at 2:48 of the 2nd round; Rogen Flores TKO'd JR Baclayo 2:09 of the 2nd round; while Noel Sungahid KO'd Jun Mala at 1:11 of the second round. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

NCRAA caging: Lightnings sink PMI Admirals

ASIAN COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY nipped Philippine Maritime Institute, 112-109, yesterday in the 13th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) men's basketball tournament at the EAC Sports Center.

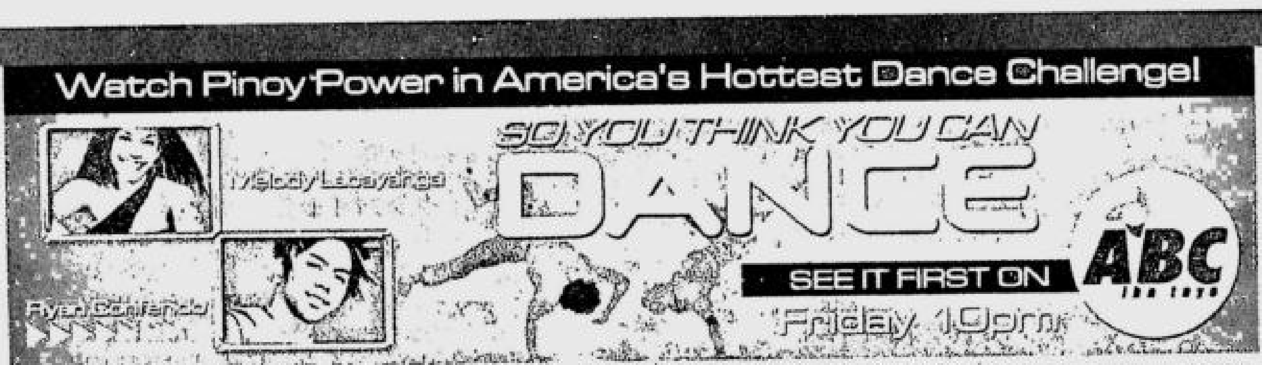
Rey Agapito canned two free throws with 15 seconds left as the Lightnings rebounded from the 62-65 loss they suffered at the hands of the Arellano University Flaming Arrows last Friday.

In the second game, Jeffrey Justiniano sank two free throws with eight seconds left to power PATTS past AMA Computer College, 71-68.

Lito Casil, a prized recruit from Dumaguete City, shot a game-high 28 points for the Lightnings, who took a 54-42 spread at halftime.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE
Wednesday, January 18, 2006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ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping		PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol 5			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Gulong Ng Palad	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Only You	Vietnam Rose	Forbidden Love	S.O.C.O.			Insider
AXN		The World's Most Extreme Races		Las Vegas		Ripley's Believe It or Not		PSI Factor (Season III)		24		Mondo Magic	Samsung Sports World	Ultimate Guinness World Records	Ultimate Guinness World Records	CSI: Miami (Season II)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Powerpuff Girls	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door		The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Pag Ba Pintig ng Puso				Una Kang Naging Akin				Ang Utol Kong Hoodlum			Persona	Gumapang Ka Sa Lusak				Magandang Hating Gabi	
Cinemax				A League Of Their Own				The Skulls III (6:15 PM)				Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story				Precious Victims			Demolition Man
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Discovery Channel		Zero Hour		American Chopper		Japan At War		Wild Weather Wind		Wild Discovery		Hour China		Quest For The Lost Pharaoh		A Haunting		Wild Weather	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-talkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			American Dragon		Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN						Pool Snooker Mosconi Cup 2004		Boxing Series Friday Night Fights				Sportscenter Asia	World Tennis Masters '05		Pool Snooker Mosconi Cup 2004		Pro Billiards '05 Women's Trick Shot Magic Billiards		Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Knock First	Ambush Makeover	Seinfeld	Complete Savages	Veronica Mars		ETC Special		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Marriage Works in Christ	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Faith In Motion	Adventures In Odyssey	EWTN Original Productions	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Defending Life	EWTN Gallery	In The Heart Of The Church	Mother Angelica Live Classics		One In Their Hearts	Catholic Social Teaching	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Carpenter's Shop	Our Father's Plan	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tiffany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Etheria	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched IV	Family Law III		The Lives Of The Saints			Who's The Boss? II	Bewitched IV	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		Tuesdays With Morrie			Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II		Strong Medicine
HBO		Lady Jane					The Black Marble				Beethoven's 2nd			Wolf				The Notebook	
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network		Golden Moments				Up Close And Personal	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Heat		Velocity		X-Men Evolution	Street Smarts	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		The Late Show David Letterman	Premium Blend	Primetime Glick	Chappelle Show
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special		Style Star	Life & Style		Intimate Portrait		Breathing Room	Genuine Article
MTV Philippines	Jams	Whatever Things	MTV Hits	Hanging Out	The 70's House	Pop Inc		MTV Hits			Aeon Flux	Homecoming	Get Spotted	TRL		Viva La Bam	Laguna Beach	Get Hitch'd	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXILOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Live!		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		Taiwan To The World		Faces And Places		5 Weddings And A Couple Of Funerals	Running For Freedom	Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		Microkillers Week		Taiwan To The World	Rough Trades	Faces And Places	
NBN		Value Vision		New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Talk Ko 'To		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)		Teledyaryo				Krusada Kontra Krimen		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants/ Zoey 101/All Grown Up Viewers Choice					All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO			Bakit Iisa Ang Puso				Ikaw Ang Buhay Ko				Buhay Kamao		Isang Bata, Isang Buhay				Ikaw Lamang		
Qtv		Bodyguard	Stalker Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	Pusong Wagi		News On Q	Balikbayan		Groupee TV	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Iron Chef		Trading Spouses		Extreme Make-Over		Newswatch Now	Keep Up The Good Work		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports		Copenhagen Masters 2005				Swatch FIVB World Tour '05 Dubai Men's Finals				Sagupaan	NBA Jam	Sportsdesk	NBA Jam	Coming With Everything: Pacquiao-Morales I				NBA Jam	NBA Inside Stuff
Sports Plus				Pac 10 College Football Arizona @ Arizona St.						NBA Game Toronto @ Utah					NBA Game Phoenix @ Sacramento				
Star Movies				Far From Heaven				Fish Don't Blink			Garfield The Movie (7:35 PM)			Nine Lives			Control (10:40PM)		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol 2006	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol 2006		Medical Investigations		The Practice		Friends	American Idol 2006
Studio 23								Batman Beyond	Spirits	Wazzup Wazzup	The Amazing Race Family Edition		CSI (8:20 PM)	Life As We Know It (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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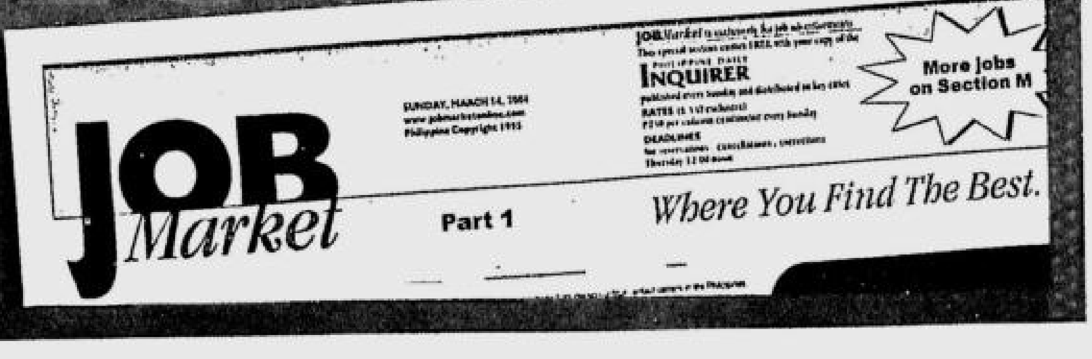

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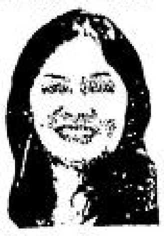
January bad for RP boxers

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

THE MAJORITY OF Filipinos are upbeat about Manny Pacquiao's chances against Erik Morales despite being the 10-8 underdog in oddsmakers' books in their Jan. 22 rematch at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas.

One boxing expert, for example, feels that if Morales has had difficulty achieving the required weight, "he won't be at a hundred percent going into the fight and will be knocked out within six rounds. On the other hand, Manny is focused and well-prepared."

Another factor going against Morales, according to the expert, is that he trained in a new camp under a new trainer.

"The changes might not serve him well. Morales can't get any better than how he fought in the first fight, but Manny can do much, much more," said the expert.

* * *

For Peter Chanliong, chief operating officer of Solar Entertainment Corp., which will air the fight here in the Philippines, the bout will be tightly fought from start to finish.

By "finish," Peter means the ninth round where he sees Manny winning by technical knockout.

"I predict it is going to be a very close fight," said Peter, who flies to Las Vegas this Friday to witness the rematch live.

The fight will be shown live at the cinemas of SM Department Stores (Mega Mall, North Edsa, Cebu, Manila, Fairview and South Mall) and Rockwell.

According to Jude Turcuato, Solar VP. for marketing, SM will sell tickets at P300 per, and Rockwell at P500 per.

Airing starts at 8 a.m., Jude said, for the undercards and a bout that features Filipino Jimrex Jaca.

Indeed, everything looked hunky-dory for Pacquiao until boxing researcher Teddy Reynoso came up with this damper: Based on his research, Teddy said January is not a good month for Pinoy boxers, especially if the match is held abroad.

"Of the five world title fights involving Pinoys held in January, all but one lost to foreign foes. December is a more favorable month, with 7 out of 8 Pinoys winning world title fights, among them Pacquiao, Luisito Espinosa, Pedro Adigue, Erbito Salavarria and Dodie Boy Peñalosa," Teddy reported.

* * *

Getting hold of a confidential report that says PBA commissioner Noli Eala had invited basketball stakeholders and BAP president Joey Lina to a meeting, I immediately texted Noli to find out what was cooking.

To start with, Noli said the report was only half true. Not all the stakeholders were invited. The meeting was only among Lina, PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad and himself.

And what did they talk about?

"We're still discussing the options and studying the precedents," was all Noli would say. I take it that these discussions will be a continuing activity, since Noli said he expects the group to come up with something more concrete by next week.

* * *

A toast to the PBA's man-of-the-hour Bo Perasol, head coach of giant killer Air21 whose name I can now spell correctly.

Having beaten the strongest PBA teams this conference, Bo was the main topic of conversation in last Saturday's two-hour "Usapang Sports" program over Radio dzME.

Studio guests and callers said Bo has proven that his ballclub's "field all 12 players" philosophy, which other coaches find unworkable, can be implemented with good results.

They also said that the Express' reversal of fortunes can be attributed to a much stronger lineup this season, and the vast improvement of new acquisition Yancy de Ocampo, thanks to a basketball scholarship in Florida, compliments of his former team Talk 'N Text.

And, of course, they said there's the dynamic and youthful coaching staff headed by PBA rookie Bo to give credit to.

* * *

Bo admitted there were times when he fielded in less than 12 players, as observed by scribes covering the PBA.

"But these were times when a player was either injured, sick or suspended," he explained.

Bo said the mere thought that his team was able to equalize the series versus Talk 'N Text—and before that, eliminate San Miguel Beer—makes him feel great.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Tri)— Even Now (9), Xabregas (10), Pert And Pretty (7), Dancing Ballerina (6), Znarf (5)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)— Ocean Cookie (7), Golden Harry (1), Big Boss (6), Refreshing (8)
Race 3—(Super 6/Tri) —Field Star (9), Hello Junior (6), Manhattan (4), Real Tough (8), Donna Messier (5), Quick Play (12)
Race 4—(Penta/Tri)— Raven (2), Bom's Bom's (6), Aim and Fire (10), Valid Hazm (1), High Class (4)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)— Dance Til Dawn (7), She Jinsky (4), Jazz In Time/Southern Prince (3), Court General (5)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Silent Operator (5), Duxo Dash (4), Besamo Mucho (2), Valiente (1)
Race 7—(Penta/Tri)—Strong Colony (8), Steel Smasher (6), Vhinggot (9), Sir Benjo (10), Shifty (2)
Race 8—(Qrt/Tri)—Golden Brook (2), Habagat (8), Heart Of The Wind (7), Special Lad (6)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Ahoy My Boy (8), Ghurkha (3), Desert Fly (12), Successful Dream (1), Earl Gray/BAlvarte (4), Mighty Mare/Rhyme And A Prayer (6)

Portmasters defang tough Teethmasters

HARBOUR Centre's defense helps it seal a big quarterfinal edge. ERIK ARAZAS

By Jasmine W. Payo

LA TENORIO STARTED OUT STRONG, WHILE JOSEPH Yeo and Rob Reyes finished hot for Harbour Centre as the Portmasters nipped the Hapee-PCU Teethmasters, 69-63, to clinch the twice-to-beat quarterfinal edge in the PBL Heroes Cup yesterday at the San Andres Gym.

"We're just one win away from the semis," said coach Jorge Gallent as his Portmasters shoot for a semifinal slot against the Teethmasters in their quarterfinal match tomorrow. "We just played tough defense down the stretch, especially against their shooters."

Tenorio flashed an all-around game with nine points, six rebounds, six assists and three steals.

Finding his range in the second half, Yeo finished with 12 points, while Reyes collected a team-high 13 points, 16 rebounds and two blocks.

The Portmasters also got an unexpected boost from reserve guard JA Coching when the Teethmasters battled back in the fourth period.

Granny Goose, also armed with the twice-to-beat bonus, will battle Montaña in the other quarterfinal pairing.

Rain or Shine and Magnolia Ice Cream have already advanced to the semifinals, the incentive given to two teams with the best records at the end of the elimination round.

GAMES TOMORROW
(San Andres Gym)
2 p.m.—Montaña vs Granny Goose
4 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Harbour Centre

The scores:

HARBOUR CENTRE 69—Reyes 13, Yeo 12, Coching 10, Tenorio 9, Paterno 7, Raymundo 6, Arellano 4, Saguindel 4, Alonzo 2, Gaco 2, Luanzon 0, Dy 0.

HAPEE-PCU 63—Espinas 12, Sanz 9, Gonzales 9, Solis 8, Moreno 7, Belga 7, Castro 6, Razon 4, Misa 1, Gloria 0, Cecilla 0.

Quarters: 22-14, 36-30, 58-48, 69-63

Barako seek sweep; TNT, Air21 break tie

SURGING RED BULL AIMS TO WRAP UP ITS quarterfinal duel with Alaska today in the San Mig Coffee-Philippine Basketball Association Fiesta Conference at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Going for a sweep on the strength of their 2-0 lead in the race-to-three series, the Barako are seeking to forge a best-of-seven clash with crowd-favorite Barangay Ginebra in the semifinals.

"It's hard to predict a sweep because for sure, Game 3 is going to be a mental battle," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao, following the Barako's 80-73 mastery of the Aces in Game 2 last Sunday. "But we will look really bad if we don't wrap it up."

In the other quarterfinal pairing, the Air21 Express have the momentum against the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals after squaring the series, 1-1, with a 90-87 win in Game 2, also last Sunday.

The Phone Pals will parade Darvin Ham, a 6-foot-7 NBA journeyman, as replacement for Damien Cantrell in their bid for a semifinal seat opposite the Purefoods Chunkee Giants.

The 32-year-old Ham, a 240-lb bruiser, saw action for at least six teams in the NBA, including the 2004 world champions Detroit Pistons.

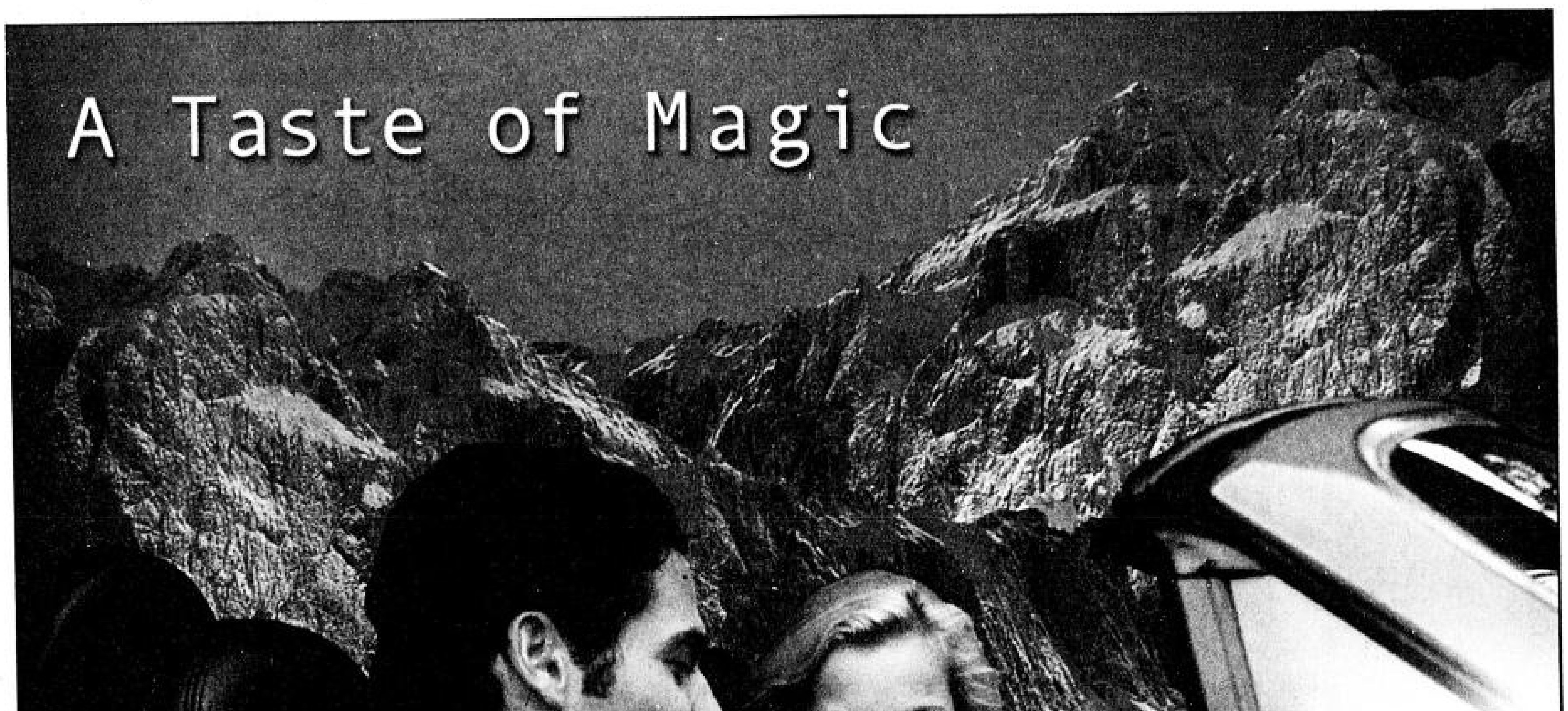
Gifted with springs on both legs, Ham was known for his while playing for the Milwaukee Bucks, Washington Wizards and the Atlanta Hawks. He even shattered a backboard once while strutting his wares with Texas Tech.

"I guess we just have to find a way against those mismatches," said Air21 coach Bo Perasol, referring to Talk 'N Text's three-guard and frontline-heavy rotations. "It's all about adjustment."

Guiao said James Penny has been nothing less than outstanding for the Barako after replacing Quemont Greer prior to the series. "I am more convinced now that Penny is the right import for us," said Guiao. "He's some sort of a savior ... and it's rubbing off on the locals." *June Navarro*

GAMES TODAY
(Cuneta Astrodome)
4:40 p.m.—Alaska vs Red Bull Barako
7:35 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Air21

Game 1—Talk 'N Text d. Air21, 111-109; Red Bull d. Alaska, 100-92
Game 2—Air21 d. Talk 'N Text, 90-87; Red Bull d. Alaska, 80-73



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WORLD No. 1 Roger Federer, who hadn't seen or knew of his opponent until match time, still reaches the second round with ease. AP

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Great start for Hingis

Swiss Miss routs foe; Federer, Hewitt gain

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—Martina Hingis looked like she'd never been away.

Playing Tuesday on the center court where she won three of her five Grand Slam titles before retiring for three years, the 25-year-old Swiss star was right at home in the first major of her comeback, routing 30th-seeded Vera Zvonareva, 6-1, 6-2, in the first round of the Australian Open.

Hingis' victory was all the more impressive in that she had so little trouble with Zvonareva, who became increasingly irritated with everything from Hingis' winners to disputed line calls, repeatedly spiking her racket and smashing balls in anger.

Some had questioned Hingis' fitness in warmup tournaments, but she moved well and looked sharp, confident and relaxed. She finished with 17 winners and only 11 unforced errors.

"I just came out here the other day. I could already feel the atmosphere coming from the previous years," Hingis said.

"You don't know how good it feels. This surface, this stadium has been so good for me."

It was an easy day overall for the Swiss, with top-seeded Roger Federer overwhelming a player that he met for the first time just before the match. The lack of familiarity didn't matter as he needed only 83 minutes to oust Denis Istomin of Uzbekistan, 6-2, 6-3, 6-2, reminding everyone that the road to the title goes through him.

Third-seeded Lleyton Hewitt survived a scare, rallying again and again to beat the Czech Republic's Robin Vik, 6-4, 2-6, 5-7, 7-6 (4), 6-3, in 3 hours, 45 minutes.

On the women's side, No. 2 Kim Clijsters advanced 6-3, 6-0, winning the last 11 games after dropping serve twice against South Korea's Cho Yoon-jeong. She showed signs of being bothered by a left hip strain that forced her out of the Sydney International last week.

Third-seeded Amelie Mauresmo, winner of the season-ending WTA Championship in November, struggled at times in a 4-6, 6-2, 6-2 win over China's Sun Tiantian, a doubles gold medalist at the Athens Olympics.

Fifth-seeded Mary Pierce, the 1995 Australian Open champion and a finalist at the French and US Opens last year, breezed past local wild-card entry Nicole Pratt 6-1, 6-1 in 52 minutes.

Hewitt, who lost last year's final to Marat Safin, appeared to be headed to an early exit in the tournament that he most desperately wants to win.

He looked dispirited and was making mistake after mistake as he fell behind in sets 2-1 and twice found himself down a break in the fourth.

Feeding off the vocal crowd, Hewitt got better as the match wore on and finally found a way to oust the 25-year-old Vik, who jumped 362 places in the rankings last year to No. 58 but was playing in only his fourth Grand Slam match and first at Melbourne Park.

"I didn't feel like I was striking the ball quite the way I would have liked," Hewitt said. *AP*

HINGIS: At home

Shaq warms up to Kobe, who then cools Heat

LOS ANGELES—SHAQUILLE O'Neal and Kobe Bryant's acrimonious relationship got physical on Monday, but wasn't what most people thought would happen.

The former teammates made up with a handshake and a hug during the warmup before Bryant scored 37 points to carry the Los Angeles Lakers to a 100-92 win over the Miami Heat.

Bryant led the Lakers to their third-straight win and first over the Heat in four tries since O'Neal was dealt to Miami.

The two finally acknowledged each other for the first time since the blockbuster trade 20 months ago. O'Neal, who had ignored Bryant in three previous encounters as opponents, shook Bryant's bandaged right hand prior to the tipoff and hugged him twice.

O'Neal said he had been under pressure from family and friends to patch things up with Bryant.

"Guys like (Hall of Famer Bill) Russell, my father, my mother told me to let bygones be bygones and just move on because there are more important things in the game than just not liking each other," said O'Neal, who scored 18 points and 10 rebounds.

The Lakers led by as much as 19 points but the Heat drew close in the fourth quarter.

Dwyane Wade hit a free throw to make it 96-92 with 42 seconds left.

But Los Angeles forward Lamar Odom helped seal the win with a brilliant turnaround jumper with 19 seconds to play to give the Lakers a comfortable six-point cushion.

Bryant and his wife are expecting a child and he and O'Neal discussed the pregnancy during the warmup.

"It's great," said Bryant, who was playing with a bandaged wrist.

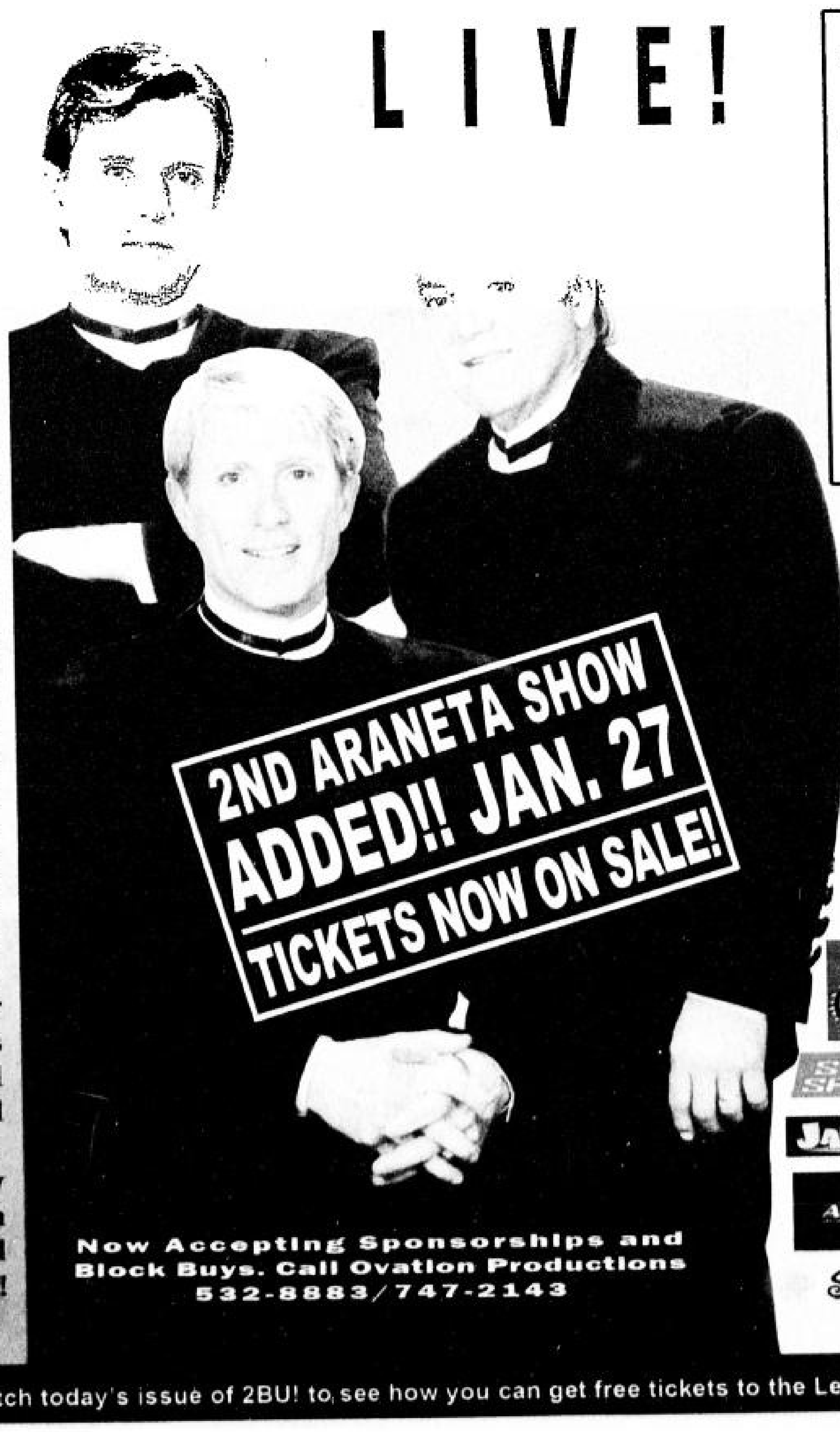
O'Neal was introduced to a chorus of mixed boos and cheers. The cheers subsided as the game went on and O'Neal was loudly booed whenever he touched the ball in the fourth quarter.

"It is a sign of respect," O'Neal said. AFP

THE FEUD may be over, but the rivalry between Miami's Shaquille O'Neal (left) and the LA Lakers' Kobe Bryant will always be there. AP

COMPLETE RESULTS: Washington 104, Philadelphia 76; New Orleans 107, Charlotte 92; Minnesota 96, New York 90; Denver 97, Chicago 94; Atlanta 94, Houston 83; LA Clippers 102, Utah 93, OT; Detroit 94, Boston 84; New Jersey 97, Indiana 92; Golden State 109, Seattle 93; San Antonio 93, Memphis 83; Dallas 114, Milwaukee 95

NBA on TV: Solar Sports— Toronto vs Utah (10 a.m., replay at 5 p.m.); Sports Plus—Toronto vs Utah (10 a.m., replay at 7 p.m.) and Phoenix vs Sacramento (9:30 p.m.)



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SPORTSWATCH

Visa woes threaten Orcollo's US stint

SOUTHEAST Asian Games gold medalist Dennis Orcollo is hoping that lightning doesn't strike thrice as far as his application for a US visa is concerned. The US Embassy had denied Orcollo's application twice before despite getting an endorsement from the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines. Orcollo was invited to play in the US Open last year along with compatriot Antonio Gabica but visa woes prevented both of them from heading west. Incidentally, Filipino cue masters dominated the tournament with Alex Pagulayan, Orcollo's favorite whipping boy in money games here, claiming the title at the expense of Jose "Amang" Parica. Francisco "Django" Bustamante completed a 1-2-3 finish for the Philippines. Orcollo, the pride of Bislig, Surigao Del Sur, is keeping his fingers crossed. He will turn 27 on Jan. 29, three days after his date with the US consul. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

Young Qatar bets head Milo net meet

QATAR age groupers head the list of players vying in the 2006 season of the Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop which kicks off Jan. 21-22 at the Philam Homes Tennis Club in Quezon City. Rachid Mansouri and Jaber Mohammed are entered in the boys' 12-under, while Haya Mansouri and Fatma Mansouri will play in the girls' 12-under. Salem Rached, Abdel Temini, Abdel Aziz Walid, Nacem Naimi, Mohsen Ajji, Ali Bahzad, Ali Abderridha, Abdullah Mhamoudi, Ali Ahmed, Hamad Al Ansari, Ali Jaber and Mohammed Taouli are listed in the unisex 10-under. Ahmed Amine of the Qatar Tennis Federation is head of delegation while the coaching staff includes skipper Mezri Ben Hassen, Naoual Karmoussi, Mohammed Bayoumi, Ihab Fatah and Filipino coach Boy Diong. The Milo netfest, organized by CTW, supported by Prince tennis equipment and Adidas and sanctioned by the Philta, will also feature competitions in the boys' and girls' 14-under, 16-under and 18-under.

NCA World Championship semis today

THOUSANDS of cockfighting aficionados are again expected to troop to the San Juan Coliseum today for the semifinal round of the prestigious NCA World Championship 8-Cock Derby which starts at 5 p.m. Of the 72 foreign and local cockers who saw action last Monday, 16 registered, two wins each, led by the group of Chuck Halbert, Richard Burris and Jesry Palmares, Jimbo Cox and JV Magsaysay, Gene Batia with Jun Topacio; Rep. Ronnie Puno, Orlando Sazon of Balbina Group, Amboy Manlapaz, Patrick Antonio, Pico Berin, Claude Bautista and Joey Mendoza, Pol Estrellado, Eric dela Rosa and Cyrus Hao, Jon Manalangsang, William Go, Joey delos Santos, R. Pineda and Mario Gonzales. The champion will be known in Friday's championship round. Meanwhile, imported trios from US Sweater man Bruce Barnette and Patrick Antonio are again at stake in today's raffle draw for paying patrons. For inquiries, call 722-7366 or 7255369.

Pinoy Cockers derby unfolds Jan. 23

LEADING cockers from Metro Manila clash anew on Monday in the second leg of the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-cock derby series at the Makati Coliseum. Jake Macasaet's San Vicente Ferrer, Emil Chua's Concrete Breaker and the Super Pacman entry emerged co-winners of the first leg last Jan. 9. Participants may submit their entries this Sunday from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

GCAP cockfest 2nd leg set Jan. 25

THE RACE for the coveted cocker of the year title heats up as the second leg of Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-cock derby series fires off Jan. 25 at the San Juan Coliseum with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. The seven co-champions in the first leg last Jan. 4 are the early pacesetters. They are Jun Topacio (JT Emerald Complexor 3000), Gerry Ramos (Against All Odds), Tony Marfori (HP Gold Wings), Boy de Roca (Fiscalizer), Boy Royo (Makisig I) and Patrick Antonio (Sagupaan Complexor 3000 and Super Pacman). Cockers from Negros and Davao as well as American cocker Gene Batia, a former pit manager in Mississippi are among invited entries. For inquiries, call 722-7366 or 725-5369.

'Pacto' takes 2-shot lead

By Musong R. Castillo

VETERAN ROBERT PACTOLERIN OVERCAME BLUSTERY WINDS and the brutally fast greens to hack out a 3-under-par 69 and take a two-stroke lead over burly Gerard Cantada yesterday in the opening round of the 3rd Omega Cup at Wack Wack's East layout.

The former RP Open champ and two-time winner of the Philippine Masters shot six birdies as against three bogeys for nines of 33-36, even as the majority of the 61-strong field struggled.

"I was lucky to shoot that low, considering the conditions today, how fast the greens played and how the pins were placed," said Pactolerin, winner of the 1990 Open at Villamor, in Filipino.

Pactolerin opened with three straight birdies and got to 5-under after picking up shots on the 10th and 11th holes. He slowed down with missed-green bogeys on the 12th, 15th and 17th before capping his round with a 9-iron shot to within four feet for another bird on the 18th.

Cantada made up for a bogey on the opening hole with two birdies, the second on the 18th, for a 36-35 card and solo second. He stood two shots clear of Mars Pucay and journeymen Randy Garalde and Anthony Balan, who all had identical 73s.

The P750,000 event, which offers P100,000 and a brand new Constellation watch to the winner, is being run by noted pro Jun Cedo.

PACTOLERIN: Six-birdie 69

Only Pactolerin and Cantada cracked par on the perennial home of the Philippine Open. In all, 30 players actually failed to break 80.

"The key was knowing how to play the wind," said Pactolerin, now 43 but still one of the best pros around.

The top 30 scores and ties after today's second 18 get to play in the money rounds.

Rey Alit, Jess Toribio, Lito Rempojo and Asian Tour veteran Danny Zarate shared sixth spot at 75 with former jungolfer Solomon Gines.

The top first round scores:

69—Robert Pactolerin; 71—Gerard Cantada; 73—Anthony Balan, Randy Garalde, Mars Pucay; 75—Rey Alit, Lito Rempojo, Jess Toribio, Danny Zarate; 76—Rene Gaviola, Solomon Gines, Orland Sungcad; 77—Jojo Abad, Ramil Bisera, Dan Cruz, Rico Legaspi, Benjie Magada, Rickie Marcelo, Juanito Pagunsan, Joe Rates, Elmer Salvador, Carito Villaroman; 78—Edgar Ababa; 79—Richard Abaring, Ruel Banares, Al Cruz, Marlon Dizon, Melvin Eso, Antolin Fernando, Raul Miñoza, Mario Slodina.

Primero rules kickoff leg of CSI criterium race

ALBERT PRIMERO LIVED UP TO HIS NAME BY ruling the first leg of Cycling Search Invitational Criterium Race in Tarlac City over the weekend.

The 27-year-old Primero piled up enough lap points to beat a pair of Pagcor Casino Filipino teammates for the top plum in the race presented by Philpost.

He seized control early, sustained his pace throughout the 18-lap race, before outsprinting Sherwin Diamsay and Orly Villanueva in the final lap to claim the win.

Primero, spearhead of Agnes Bikeshop Team, scored 10 points in the final sprint and finished with 31 points to show the way in the centerpiece men's elite and under-23 category of the four-division event featuring the country's premier and upcoming riders.

Diamsay, a native of Pura, Tarlac, garnered six points in the final sprint for a second-best 24 points, while Villanueva of the San Leonardo Cycling team scored 19 points for third place.

Tac's showed the way in team event with 35.

Sharing the limelight in the event organized by Treo Sales and Management Corp. were Jeffrey Caritativo who reigned in the 12-lap youth race; masters division champion Alexander Billon; and Don Sembrano, winner of the people's race.

SCUAA CAGING

PUP routs Earist five

DEFENDING CHAMPION POLYtechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) routed Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (Earist), 89-69, Monday in the 18th State Colleges and Universities Athletic Association-National Capital Region men's basketball tournament at the TUP court.

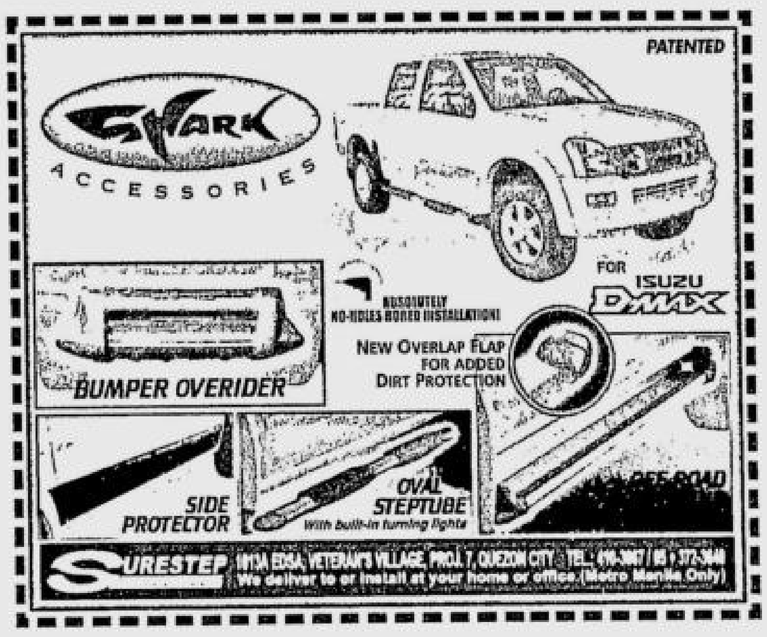
Held to a 20-20 count after the first quarter, the Marooners unleashed a series of scoring spurts to move beyond reach, 71-45.

The victory was PUP's third straight in as many games, putting the Marooners within two games of pulling off a sweep and claiming another title.

In other games, host Technological University of the Philippines trampled Philippine Normal U, 87-67, to remain unscathed after two matches, while Philippine State College of Aeronautics also downed Earist, 74-64, for its first win in two tries.

PNU and Earist are already out of contention with 0-3 records.

Meanwhile, TUP bagged the first gold in the arnis competition after Ibrahim Iymanbin ruled the anyo double stick event.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Shopwise wins in 2005 OFR

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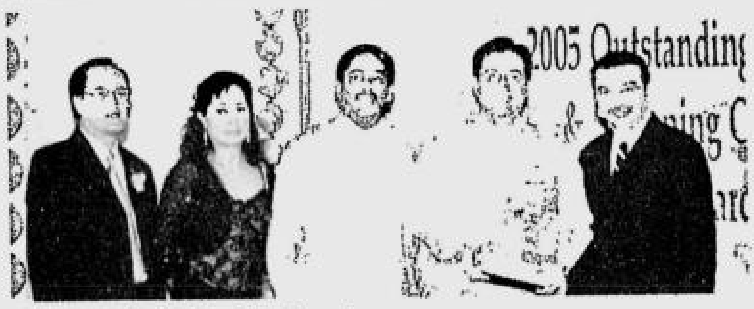
Abenson wins in the OFR Awards

Celine gets 2005 OFR Award

Bayo, Hall of Famer in 2005 OFR

Rusty Lopez grabs Fashion Award in 2005 OFR

Folded & Hung bags Hall of Fame award in 2005 OFR

HBC wins Specialty Award in 2005 OFR

Messsages

I am very honored to be part of an institution that honors world-class Filipino retailers and malls - the search for the Outstanding Filipino Retailers & Shopping Center of the Year (OFR/SCY). Now on its 9th year, the industry has hailed 79 homegrown retailers shopping centers serving as the models of retailing excellence.

The original spirit behind the OFR was to recognize successful retailers through growth performance and values-based practices. Only a few were awarded at the beginning because of the strict OFR selection process. Slowly, the number of winners increased due to the vast improvement of the local retailers in terms of marketing, merchandising, utilization of retail technology, and the drive to compete with global counterparts. Local retailers upgraded themselves though continuous education, participation in international conferences and exhibits, and networking with foreign consultants and counterparts.

I have always believed that the Filipino retailer is one of the best in the world and that he only needs a push in the right direction for him to shine in the global marketplace. The annual Outstanding Filipino Retailers is the push - encouraging retailers to achieve world-class standards and to cross Philippine shores carrying our local brands to the global marketplace.

My congratulations to the winners of the 2005 Outstanding Filipino Retailers and Shopping Center of the Year! I hope to see more retailers join this elite circle in the years to come.

SAMIE LIM
Chairman Emeritus, PRA

For almost a decade, the Philippine Retailers Association and the Department of Trade and Industry had been at the forefront of steering Filipino entrepreneurs to retailing excellence and world-class retail standards through the recognition of retailers who epitomize these qualities at the annual search for the Outstanding Filipino Retailers and Shopping Center of the Year.

This year, we have expanded our search to include more categories and more retailers from outside Metro Manila because of the growing and diversifying retail niches in our local market. We also wanted to recognize that innovation and excellence thrives just as well, in the regions. At the same time, we are also recognizing for the first time the Filipino retailer who had successfully expanded the brand overseas thru the first Global Retailer of the Year award.

The highlight of the 9th OFR Awards is the first ever President's Award given to an individual who has made a significant contribution not only to the retail industry but to the country's economy as a whole. And it is my pleasure to give this award to the undisputed Father of Philippine Retailing, Mr. Henry Sy, Sr.

May this annual awards serve not only as an inspiration but as a beacon to Filipino retailers--to continue striving for excellence and global competitiveness.

Mabuhay and congratulations to the winners!

MARS C. CHUA
President, PRA

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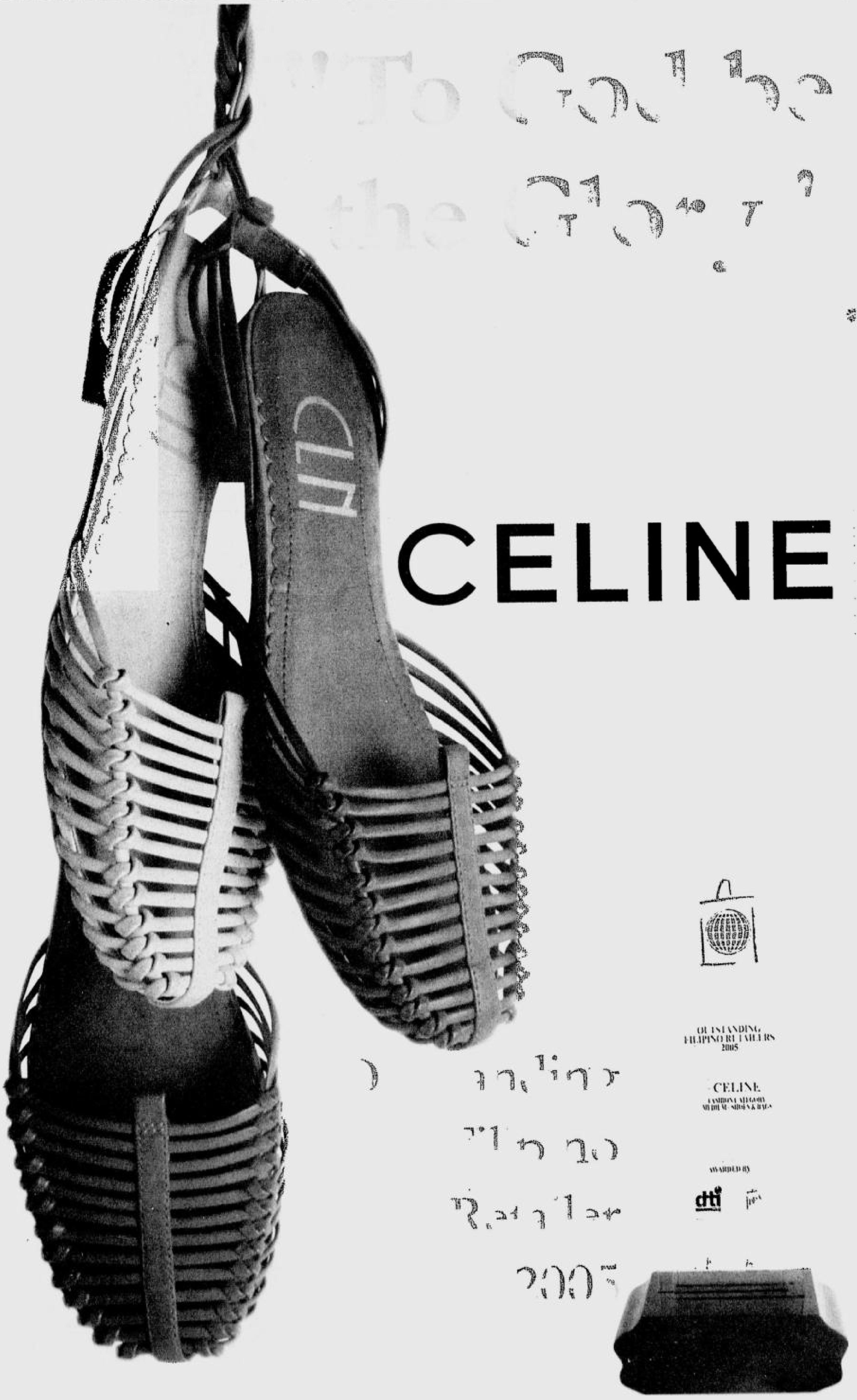
MEGA MAGAZINE

Video City enters OFR Hall of Fame

Bench Fix wins Most Promising Retailer in 2005 OFR

BHF wins Special Award for Regional Retailer in 2005 OFR

Nepo Mall wins Special Award for Regional Mall in 2005 OFR


OUTSTANDING FILIPINO RETAILERS 2005
CELINE
FASHION CATEGORY MEDIUM SHOES & BAGS
AWARDED BY
dti

CELINE

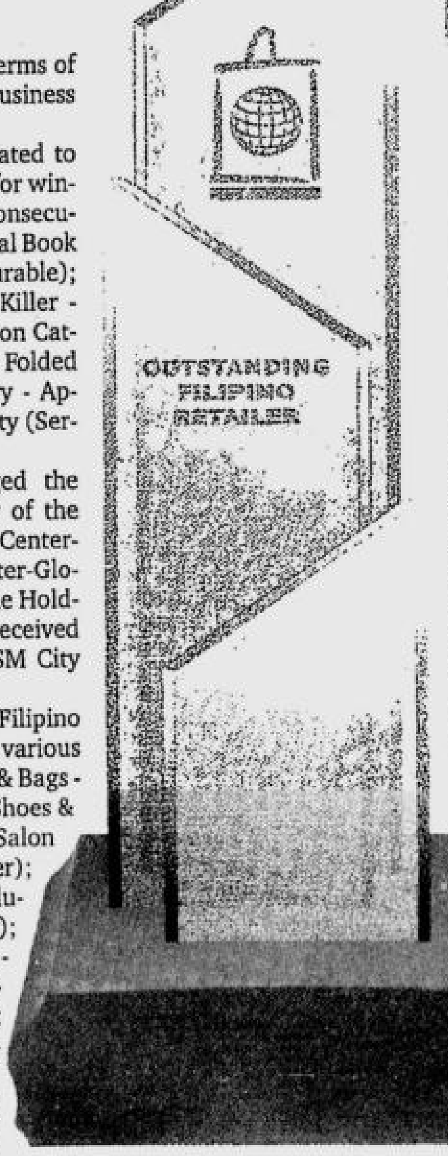
Fashion Category - Medium - Shoes & Bags
Award given by the Department of Trade & Industry and Philippine Retailers Association

PRA honors top Filipino retailers

PGMA presents SM's Henry Sy 'Father of Philippine Retailing' trophy

The Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) recently honored the country's best homegrown retailers during the 2005 Outstanding Filipino Retailers (OFR) & Shopping Center of the Year Awards Night at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

HENRY SY, SR. RECEIVES PRESIDENT'S AWARD AT OFR AWARDS NIGHT
President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo presents the first PRA President's Award to Philippine retail icon, Henry Sy, Sr of SM Group of Companies during the 9th Outstanding Filipino Retailers & Shopping Center of the Year Awards Night organized by the Philippine Retailers Association and the Department of Trade & Industry. Photo shows (from left) PRA Chairman Emeritus Samie Lim, PRA Chairman Bienvenido Tantoco III, PGMA, Henry Sy, Sr., and PRA President Mars Chua.



The award, now on its 9th year, seeks to encourage Filipino retailers to adopt world-class standards and practices and be globally competitive. The award will recognize the Filipino Retailers who have epitomized the model of a successful retailer in terms of growth and good ethical practices.

The highlight of the evening was the awarding of the 1st PRA President's Award to SM Shoemart's Henry Sy as "Father of Philippine Retailing" for his accomplishments and contribution to Philippine retailing and to the country as a whole--creating some 1.5 million jobs, elevating Philippine retailing to world-class standards through his malls, and raising people's aspirations and levels of sophistication abreast with international tastes and standards. The award was presented by Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Also given for the first time was the Global Retailer of the Year Award which was won by Bench for being a local brand that has successfully expanded overseas. Personally receiving the award was Bench chair Ben Chan.

This year's batch of winners is a mix of established and admired brand names in the industry which have epitomized the model of a successful retailer in terms of growth and good ethical business practices.

Five retailers were elevated to the Hall of Fame this year for winning the award for two consecutive years. They are National Book Store (Category Killer - Durable); Mercury Drug (Category Killer - Consumable); Bayo (Fashion Category - Apparel Medium); Folded & Hung (Fashion Category - Apparel Small), and Video City (Services Category).

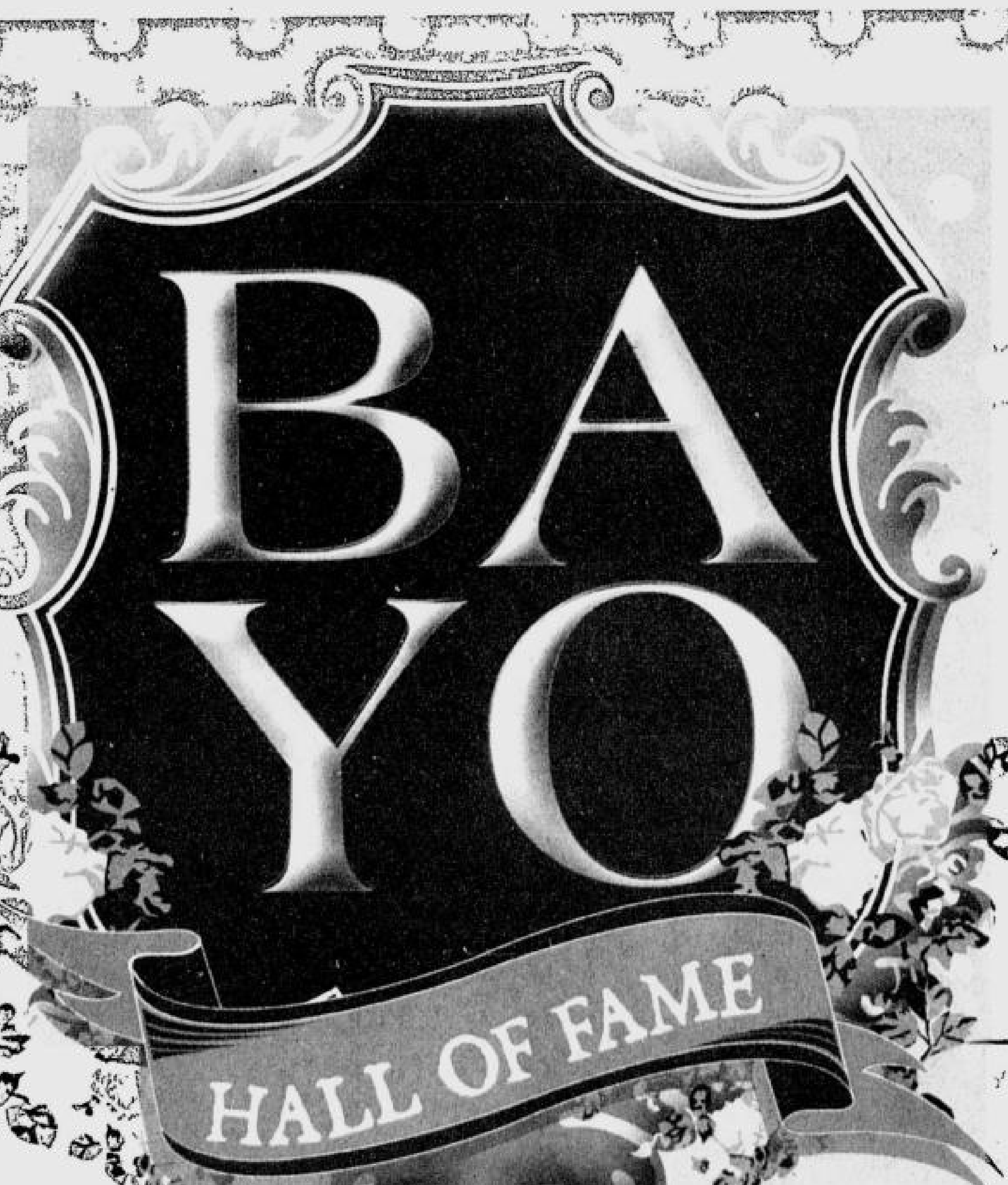
SM City Baguio bagged the coveted Shopping Center of the Year award with Ayala Center-Greenbelt and Ayala Center-Glorietta as finalists. SM Prime Holdings president Hans Sy received the award on behalf of SM City Baguio.

Named Outstanding Filipino Retailer (OFR) winners in various categories: Celine (Shoes & Bags - Medium); Rusty Lopez (Shoes & Bags - Small); Bench Fix Salon (Most Promising Retailer); HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives (Specialty Category); Abenson (Category Killer - Big Ticket); and Shopwise (Department Store/Hypermarket Category).

This year's Special Award of regional retailers went to Nepo Mall of Angeles, Pampanga (Regional Shopping Center of the Year Award) and BHF Prime Group Corp. of Ilocos Sur.

Supported by MasterCard International, PLDT Business Solutions, Philippine Daily Inquirer, and Tyco Fire & Security with SM Shoemart, Ayala Center, HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives and Argon Animation Inc, as sponsors, the OFR '05 finalists were Oxygen, Artwork, Freeway, B Club, CMG, Fino, Astrovision, Maxitoy Lab, Alteration Plus, JTC Mall, Candice Megamart, and Family Choice Megamart.

This year's event was attended by who's who in Philippine retailing--the Sy Family--Mr. & Mrs. Henry Sy, Tessie Sy-Coson, Hans Sy, Herbert Sy, Harley Sy, SM VP-Mall Operations Annie Garcia, SM SVP-Store Operations Jorge T. Mendiola; National Book Store founder & 2005 Entrepreneur of the Year winner Socorro Ramos, Mercury Drug president Vivian Que Azcona, PCCI president Donald Dee; Procter & Gamble president Johnip Cua; Cinderella president Edgar Coronel; Ayala Land VP Rowena Tomeldan, Robinsons VP Minda Carpio; HBC chair and CEO Dra. Rosalinda Hortaleza and MasterCard VP-Marketing Judith Marie Dayrit.



Outstanding Filipino Retailer 2005

Awarded by:
Department of Trade and Industry
and
Philippine Retailers Association

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OPENING TODAY

Jarhead

Stars Jake Gyllenhaal, Jamie Foxx, Peter Sarsgaard, Lucas Black
Directed by Sam Mendes

Based on the best-selling memoir of Anthony Swofford, the movie revisits the first Gulf War, as seen through the eyes of an eager young Marine (Gyllenhaal). It follows his strange odyssey through the blazing oil fields of the Middle Eastern desert-where the young soldiers "sustain themselves on humor and camaraderie." Bob Longino of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution describes it as "rollicking and head-spinning," aching to be "big, bold, ambitious, unsettling, rousing and frightening… It has its moments, [but] never quite attains its loftiest goals." Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun-Times disagrees: "It's a war movie that rises above the war… uncanny in its effect. It contains no heroism, little action, no easy laughs."

Underworld Evolution

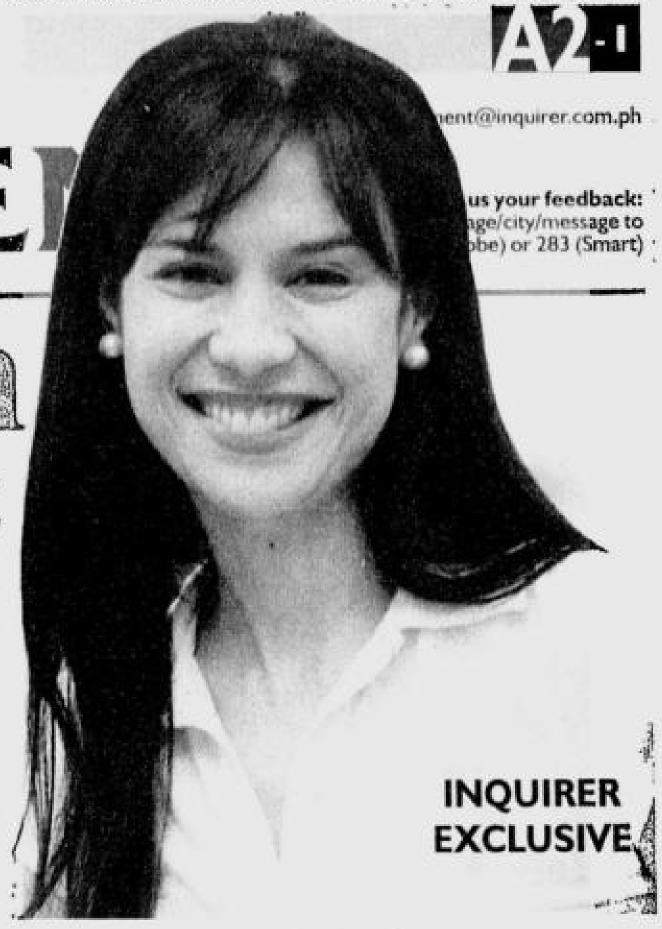
Stars Kate Beckinsale, Scott Speedman, Derek Jacobi, Bill Nighy
Directed by Len Wiseman

The sequel to the 2003 monster hit continues to chronicle the epic battle between vampires and werewolves and the unlikely romance between undead Selene (Beckinsale) and hirsute Michael (Speedman). After earning $100 million at the tills, the low-budget Part One made a further killing when it was released on DVD, "matching its box-office earnings," according to the director. Moviesonline.com calls it a "fast-paced, modern-day tale of action, ruthless intrigue and forbidden love." Larry Carroll of MTV.com predicts it will be "the most lovingly made movie ever to involve immortal bloodsuckers and merciless beasts." That's probably because the director is married to the lead actress.

OPENING/ A2-6

Plinky relies on solid family support

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan



INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

SHE prays and meditates to cope with the pain.

SOME PEOPLE SAY I'm destroying the Recto name. I don't care what they think. They don't know my family," said controversial TV personality and fitness expert Plinky Recto.

Plinky has accused her former lover, a wealthy lawyer from Negros Occidental, of kidnapping their one-year-old son. She earlier charged him with domestic abuse. He has hit back, accusing her of having an affair with her bodyguard. He also claimed Plinky needs psychiatric help and that, therefore, their son is not safe in her care.

Facing possibly the most trying period of her life, the former TV host said she runs to her family for comfort. In an interview with INQUIRER Entertainment last week, Plinky said she gets a lot of support especially from her brothers, Ralph, a senator, and Ricky, vice governor of Batangas.

"As to what kind of support I'm getting, it's for me to know and for you to find out," said Plinky. "We are basically quiet people, when anyone in the family is in trouble, we join forces."

> 'We're quiet people but, when anyone is in trouble, we join forces'

Plinky's grandfather, the late Claro M. Recto, was president of the 1934 Constitutional Convention. Rafael Recto, prominent lawyer and assemblyman, is her father. Senator Ralph is married to actress and Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos.

Plinky was once married to Raffy Dominguez. Their marriage has been annulled. They have a 10-year-old son.

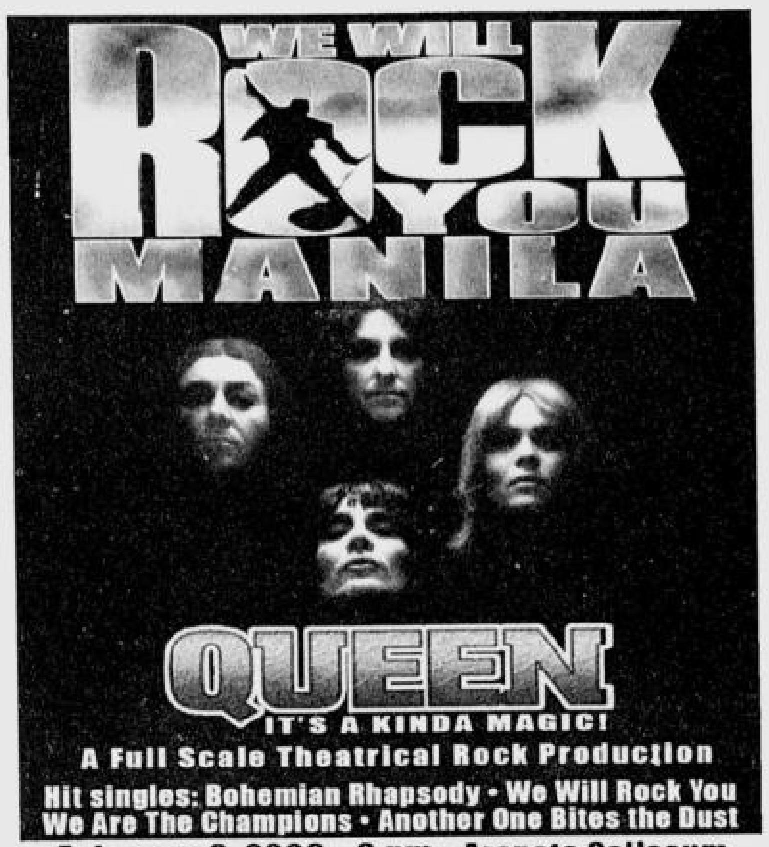
"The whole family celebrated the New Year in Tagaytay," she related. "We danced for four straight hours. I hadn't danced like that in a long while. It's difficult nowadays because my dad is not well. I didn't talk about my problems because the concentration was on my dad. Ralph kept asking, 'Are you okay?' He's like that."

How did the family react to the problem you're now facing?

They thought it was just a domestic squabble, until my eldest brother saw me black and blue and my other brother found out about the beatings. I didn't want to bother them. It took some time for me to admit that it was not a relationship I should be in anymore. The problems started in late 2002.

Your brothers are awfully quiet. Did you ask them not to talk with the media?

PLINKY/ A2-6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Intense Power Laser, the latest scientific and technological breakthrough, offers a return to a more youthful appearance through restoration of even color and smoothness, relief from pigmentary sun damage, fine lines, and wrinkles, enlarged pores, as well as acne, unwanted hair, or redness and flushing associated with rosacea. In addition, treatments are short, pain-free, and do not involve downtime, hence allow immediate return to all activities.

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Intense Power Laser emits a no coherent, broad spectrum light. With each pulse, the procedure emits a spectrum extending from 500nm to 1200nm. The light energy is customized for a given procedure.
Sun Damage, Rosacea, Redness. For dilated vessels, as seen in patients with sun damage and rosacea, the energy with high absorption by hemoglobin and oxyhemaglobin reaches the dermal capillary bed and selectively destroys the abnormal vessels. With emphasis on past, present and future skin care, the procedure can dramatically improve the skin's appearance, giving it a more even tone and texture, while reducing flushing in the area.
Pigmentation Problems, Brown Spots, Age Spots, Melasma. To arrest these conditions, the energy coming from Intense Power Laser is selectively absorbed by the melanin, which destroys the abnormally pigmented cells, resulting in a more even complexion.
Spider Veins, Facial Telangiectasias, Vascular Lesions. Intense Power Laser has provided an effective solution for benign vascular lesions such as facial telangiectasias or leg veins. The procedure provides the added benefit of reducing the redness associated with these conditions.
Skin Texture, Fine Lines, Wrinkles, Enlarged Pores, Acne Scars. Intense Power Laser also effectively improves skin texture, fine lines, wrinkles, acne scars as well as reduces pore size, due to new collagen deposition in the dermis. A series of treatments with a particular wavelength can lead to smoothing of deeper wrinkles and firming of sagging skin.
Acne. Done in conjunction with prescription medication, Intense Power Laser has been clinically proven to accelerate the healing process for acne. The procedure works by directing well-controlled pulses of light into the upper skin layer and damages the walls of the vessels supplying blood to the sebaceous glands. This slows down sebum production.
Permanent Hair Reduction. The wavelength, exposure duration, and energy level are chosen to selectively damage targeted hair follicles with minimum damage to the surrounding tissue. The energy is absorbed by the hair follicles and causes thermal injury to the hair follicle.

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For the best dermatological treatment and results, visit the Dermclinic branch nearest you or call 374-3672; 721-3536; 818-6274; or 807-2169. Log on to www.dermclinic.com.ph

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SHOW TIME

Tribute to Canseco 2

KUH LEDESMA AND SPECIAL GUESTS BASIL Valdez, Christian Bautista, Dulce, Pilita Corrales, Louie Ocampo and harpist Noelle Cassandra reunite at the Philippine International Convention Center on Jan. 21 for a repeat of "Paano Kita Mapasasalamatan," a tribute to George Canseco.

Last Nov. 19, a cast composed of some of the biggest names in the local music scene gathered for the first staging of the tribute to the late composer of such OPM classics as "Ngayon at Kailanman," "Dito Ba," "Kung Ako'y Iiwan Mo," "Gaano Kadalas ang Minsan," "Ako Ay Pilipino" and "Kapantay ay Langit."

KUH Ledesma

This time around, they will be joined by Rey Valera, Side A Band, and Piolo Pascual.

For tickets to the repeat of Paano Kita Mapasasalamatan, call Headline Concepts at 5517255 or PICC at 5516296.

Tonight

Nyoy Volanteat Virgin Café, Tomas Morato, QC

Freeverse at Suburbia

Richard Merk, Eddie K and Lyn Sherman at Merk's, Greenbelt 3

Rockin' Revival at Conways Bar, Shangri-La Makati

Tomorrow

Michael Angelo and Mocha with Spin Art at Virgin Café, Tomas Morato, QC

Silk at Suburbia

Marri Nallos at Hyatt Marina Casino Hotel in Manila

January 20

Backstreet Boys live in Manila at the Araneta Coliseum. Call 9115555.

Jason Mraz at Rockwell Tent

Pat Upton at the Aliw Theater

1st International Jazz and Arts Festival at The Podium

ROCKIN' Revival

"Amor Mitchmo" (Not A Valentine Show) with Mitch Valdes at Captain's Bar Mandarin Oriental; 9 p.m.

Jaya 10...Live!@Zirkoh, Timog Ave., QC.

NTwine and Freeverse at Virgin Café, Tomas Morato, QC

Twisted Pair and Livewire at Suburbia

Flinstones and The Gang at Merk's, Greenbelt 3

January 21

Jason Mraz at NBC Tent

Kuh Ledesma, Basil Valdez and Christian Bautista in "Paano Kita Mapapasalamatan," a tribute to George Canseco at the PICC. Call 5517255.

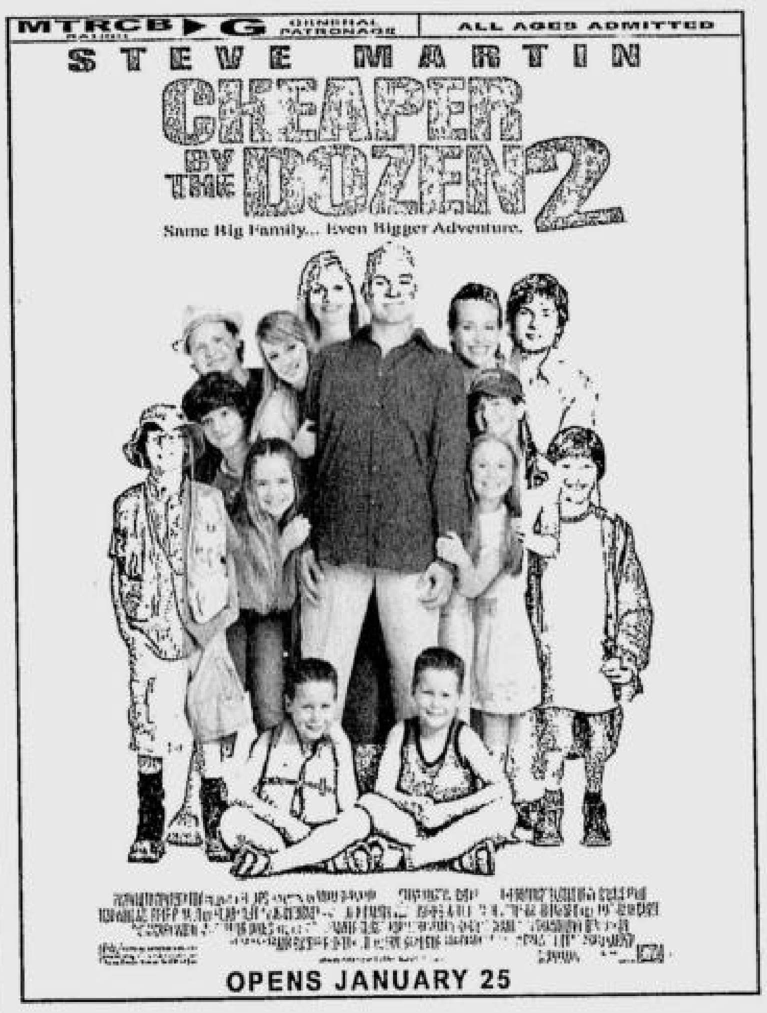
"Amor Mitchmo" (Not A Valentine Show) with Mitch Valdes at Captain's Bar Mandarin Oriental; 9 p.m.

Pat Upton at the Manila Hotel

604 at Virgin Café, Tomas Morato, QC

Escape at Virgin Café, Tomas Morato, QC

Freestyle and Wiseguys at Suburbia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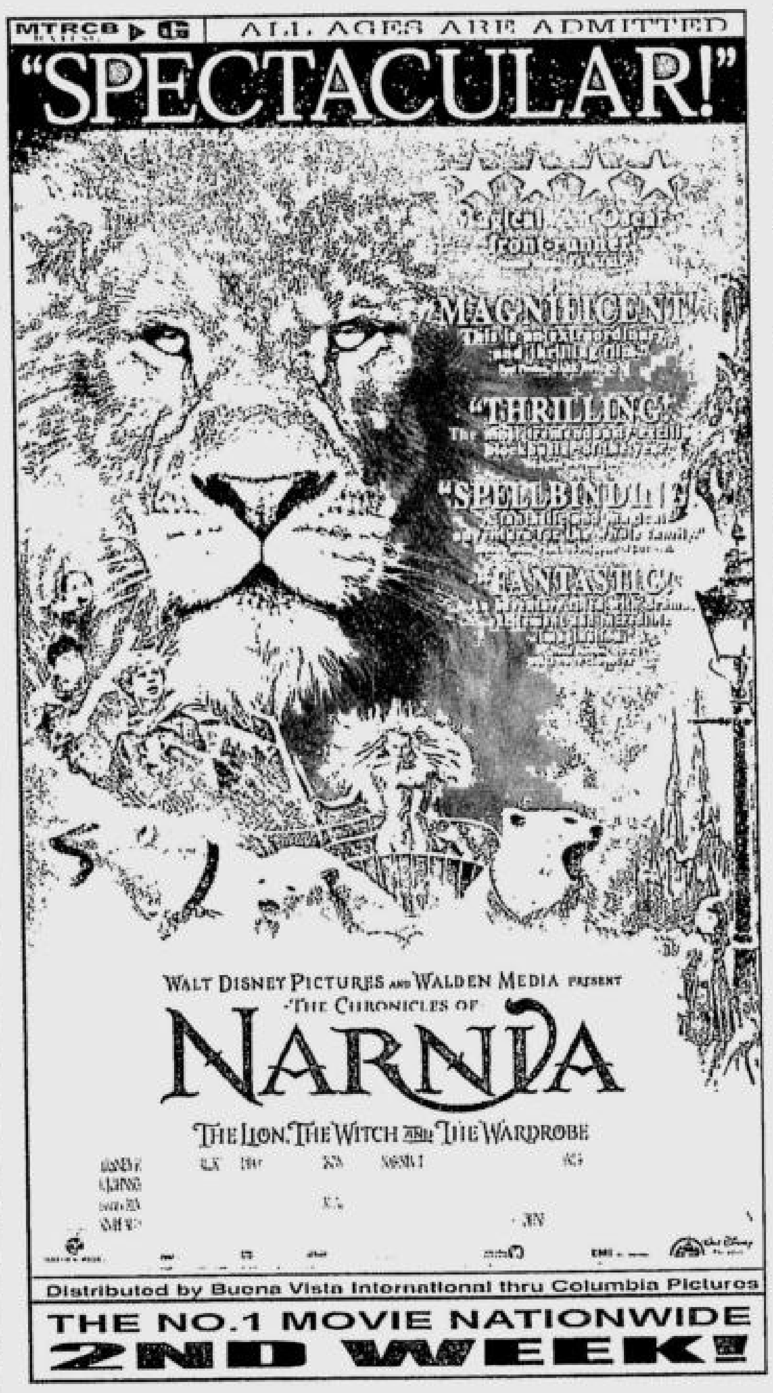
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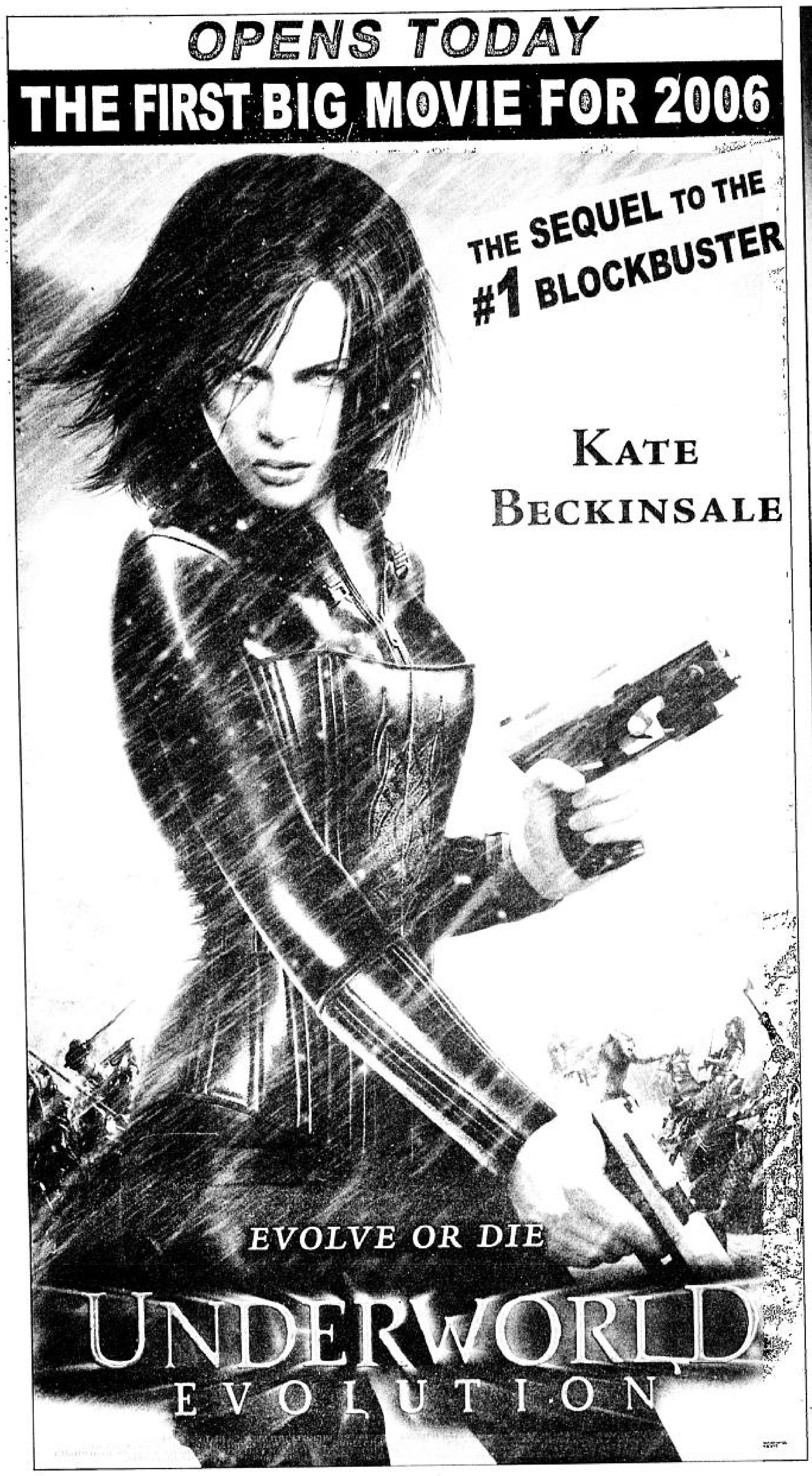
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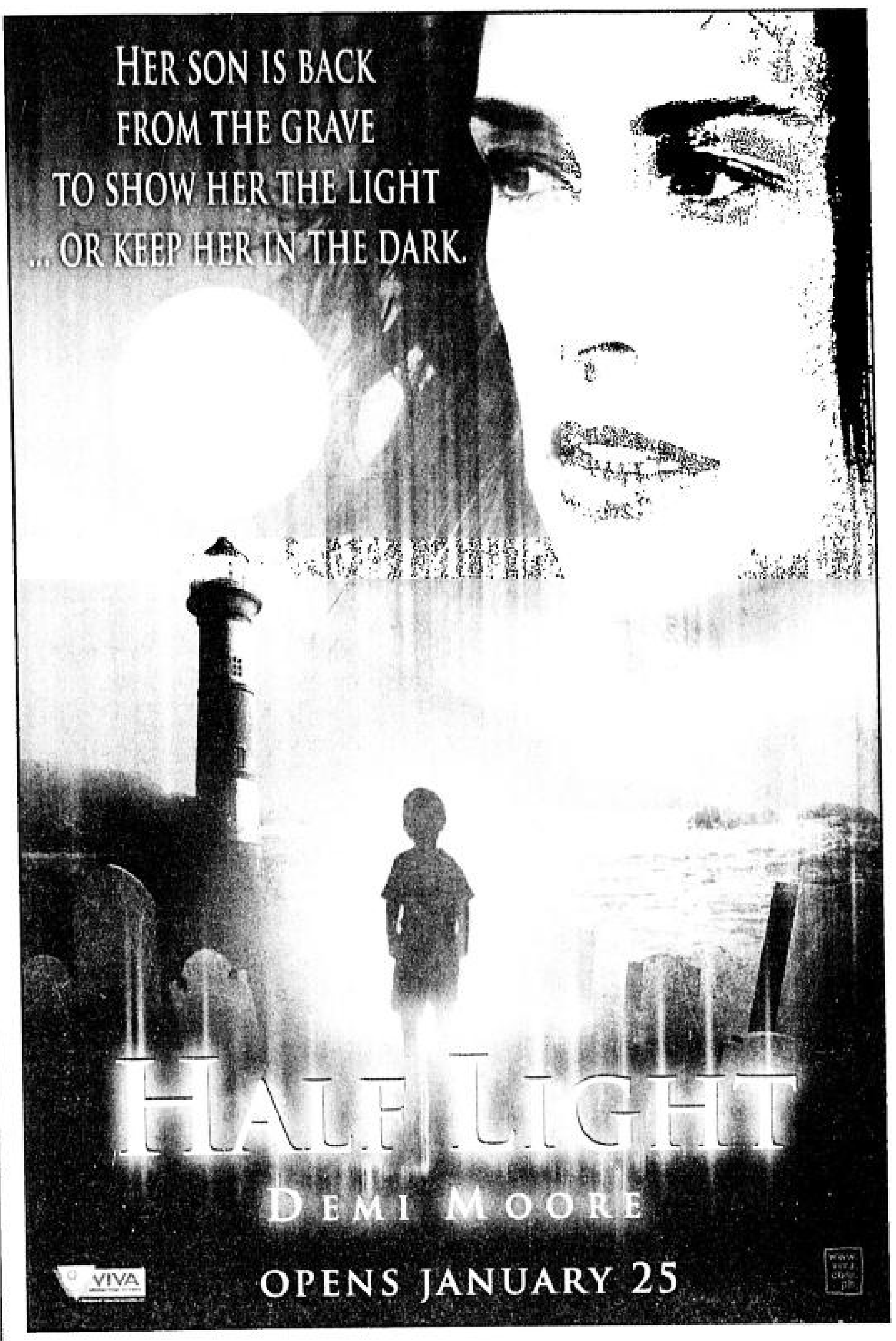
HER SON IS BACK
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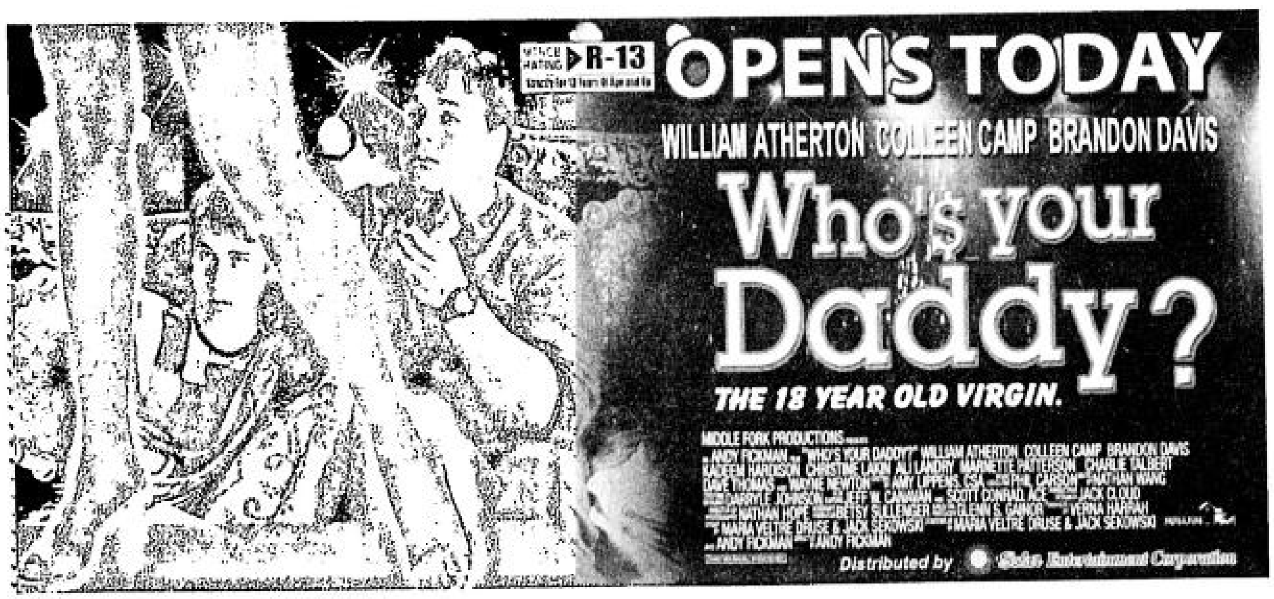
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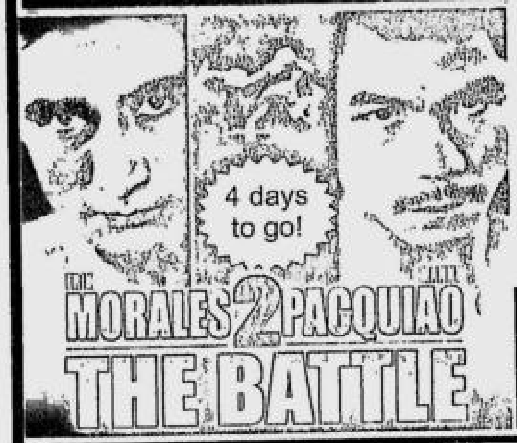

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2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
11:50FS/12:20MF/03:10/06:00
08:20LFS/09:00LMF/11:20END

MEGAMALL
1 UNDERWORLD 2
11:15FS/11:40MF/01:55/04:10/06:25
08:10LFS/08:40LMF/10:25END

CEBU (032) 231-3876
1 NARNIA
11:00FS/11:10MF/01:45/04:20/06:55
09:15LFS/09:30LMF/11:50END
2 UNDERWORLD 2
11:20FS/11:30MF/01:30/03:30/05:30/07:30
09:20LFS/09:30LMF/11:20END
3 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
11:35FS/11:50MF/02:15/04:40/07:05
09:05LFS/09:30LMF/11:30END

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1 UNDERWORLD 2
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12 BLUE MOON

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6 AKO LEGAL WIFE
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8 LITTLE MANHATTAN
9 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
10 BLUE MOON

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NARNIA
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UNDERWORLD 2
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BLUE MOON
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UNDERWORLD 2
NARNIA
WHO'S YOUR DADDY
BLUE MOON
RUMOR HAS IT
DON'T GIVE UP ON US

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UNDERWORLD 2
PETA
BLUE MOON
KING KONG

SM CITY MARILAO
NARNIA
THE MAN
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
ST. ANGE

SM CITY DASMARINAS
NARNIA
THE MAN
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
ST. ANGE

SM CITY LUCENA
NARNIA
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
BLUE MOOON
DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BATANGAS
JUST LIKE HEAVEN
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
NARNIA
THE MAN

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NARNIA
UNDERWORLD 2
EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
IN HER SHOES
WHO'S YOUR DADDY
KING KONG
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
NARNIA

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PRIME
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
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IN HER SHOES

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FAMILY STONE 1:40/4:20/7:00/9:40
BLUE MOON 2:00/4:30/7:00/9:30
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ROUNDUP

The 'CSI' effect

LOS ANGELES-REALITY TV THEY ARE NOT, but two hit shows are so convincing as imitations of life in the criminal justice system that some legal experts worry they're distorting the expectations of real jurors.

The influence of the "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" and "Law & Order" franchises has permeated American law. Lawyers ask would-be jurors whether they watch the shows and then change strategies depending on the answers. Law schools maintain video libraries of the programs as teaching tools and even analyze the plot lines in class.

Which side benefits the most—prosecutors or defense attorneys—is debatable. While "Law & Order" glamorizes prosecutors, "CSI" can set standards for the infallibility of forensic evidence that prosecutors can't often meet—a science-solves-all formula that millions of viewers may bring to jury service.

There is no debating, however, one clear, very widespread result of these programs: The justice system is now facing what legal experts call, "the CSI effect," a TV-bred demand by jurors for high tech, indisputable forensic evidence before they will convict. *AP*

Harry Potter audition

LONDON—Thousands of hopeful teenage girls queued in the cold London air for hours at the weekend, some overnight, for a chance to star in the next Harry Potter movie.

The excited teenagers, aged between 13 and 16, stood patiently, some with their parents, outside Westminster Central Hall in London on Saturday in a queue stretching over several streets.

They were responding to a search by Warner Brothers for a young actress to play the role of Luna Lovegood in "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," the fifth book in the massively popular series by author J.K Rowling that is due to start filming next month.

"I check the Harry Potter website every day and saw the auditions advertised," said Kim Allen, who was first in the queue after arriving late Friday and sleeping outside.

Harry Potter Productions, which organized the casting, asked girls for details of their hair color, size and nationality in their applications. They said they were not seeking a particular type of girl.

Rowling says that Luna is a sort of "anti-Hermione," an opposite to her pragmatic female heroine.

Luna is described as having straggly, waist-length, dirty-blond hair and a dazed look on her face. *AFP*

300th 'Conversation'

PRIVATE Conversations with Boy Abunda (6 p.m., ANC) celebrates it 300th episode tomorrow with special guest Rep. Chiz Escudero.

PCBA has featured movies stars, singers, politicians, artists and other people of consequence. "Private Conversations with Boy Abunda" has also been declared "Best Talk Show" and Abunda "Best Talk Show Host" by various awards groups. The program has featured President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Lea Salonga, Martin Nievera, Cherie Gil, Ito Curata, Victor Hansen, Anita Roddick, Deepak Chopra, Lou Pearlman, Neale Donald Wasch, Joker Arroyo and literally hundreds of other celebrities in different fields.

Salonga found the experience "unpredictable, fun, and exhilarating."

Marichu Maceda said she "left [after the program] with a sense of good feeling about the whole exercise."

"Memorable" was how Inno Sotto described his episode on the show, and Martin Nievera likened his encounter with Abunda to "open heart surgery."

"It was uplifting and exciting," said Sen. Edgardo Angara of his interview and Gov. L-Ray Villafuerte swore, "Only Boy Abunda can get me to reveal the color of my underwear on national television."

El Oro on CEB

Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) chair Rolando "Jacky" Atienza has formally announced the appointment of award-winning actress Elizabeth Oropesa as the newest member of the Cinema Evaluation Board (CEB), representing the film industry.

Atienza said Oropesa—earlier mistaken as the "Bernadette Valdez" rumored to be a leading candidate for the board's chairmanship—has accepted the position. "Her real name is Elizabeth Valdez," Atienza explained.

Oropesa and academician Bernie Villegas, president of the University of Asia and the Pacific, are the first two new members of the board under the term of Atienza.

The task of the CEB, which is under the FDCP, is to evaluate well-crafted films and reward them with tax rebates. *Bayani San Diego Jr.*

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2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
4 RUMOR HAS IT
5 JARHEAD
6 The Chronicles of NARNIA
7 BLUE MOON
AKO LEGAL WIFE
8 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
9 THE FAMILY STONE
10 KING KONG

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 JARHEAD
4 LITTLE MANHATTAN
5 The Chronicles OF NARNIA
6 RUMOR HAS IT
7 KING KONG

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1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 RUMOR HAS IT
5 JARHEAD
6 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
7 BLUE MOON
8 KING KONG

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 KING KONG
3 JARHEAD
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
6 UNDERWORLD 2

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2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 JARHEAD
4 The Chronicles of NARNIA

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2 IN HER SHOES
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5 JARHEAD

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2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 THE FAMILY STONE
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
5 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
6 BEAUTIFUL BOXER

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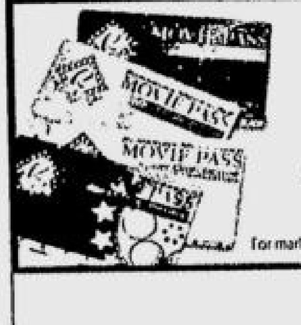
2 IN HER SHOES
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 PRIME
5 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
6 CRY_WOLF



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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 THE FAMILY STONE	3 THX THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GUARANTEED SEATS	4 AKO LEGAL WIFE	5 KING KONG	6 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	7 ZATHURA
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX ZATHURA GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GUARANTEED SEATS	3 KING KONG GUARANTEED SEATS	4 FAMILY STONE GUARANTEED SEATS	5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ZATHURA	3 FAMILY STONE	4 KING KONG	5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US		
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Backstreet Boy recalls 'high' life

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

TAKE FIVE

IT'S BEEN 14 YEARS SINCE an aviation entrepreneur named Lou Pearlman, inspired by the success of the New Kids on the Block, masterminded the creation of another clean-cut "boy band" called the Backstreet Boys (BSB).

BSB is said to be the biggest-selling boy band in history, having broken album and concert sales worldwide. The boy band craze may be over, but what's confounding is that BSB's latest CD, "Never Gone," is still selling by the millions (though not as hot as the previous ones).

The group was not yet famous when it came to Manila on a promo tour in the '90s, so this will be the first time that Pinoy fans will see the boys (now in their late 20s and early 30s) as superstars perform on Friday, Jan. 20 at the Araneta Coliseum. One of BSB's original members, Alexander James "AJ" McLean, had a phone chat with INQUIRER Entertainment and recalled the early days:

What was your life like before BSB?

I was in Southern Florida doing a lot of musical theater, acting in plays, modeling in runway shows, joining talent shows, doing stuff for Nickelodeon and Universal as well as Disney. The next thing I knew, I was in a singing group called the Backstreet Boys.

How did you get together?

Nick (Carter), Howie (Dorough) and I met through the Orlando entertainment circuit-whenever Disney and Universal held auditions, we'd see each other. So we got together and soon we met Kevin (Richardson) who was working in Disney at the time. He kept talking about his cousin Brian ("B-Rok" Littrell) who was in the church choir and was also a good dancer and a nice guy. So we got him, too.

How difficult was it before BSB hit pay dirt?

We definitely paid our dues doing small club shows, the grand opening of a pet store and of a car dealership; we sang in airplanes, we did whatever we could to be heard and be seen. We went through a lot until finally in 1995 we got signed to our record label (Jive). We've been with them for the past 13 years.

How did you first deal with success?

We didn't really know what to expect. But once we got their first big paycheck, each one's first thought was to buy a house and a car. Nick bought a central air-conditioning system for his mom's house. I myself bought a house for my mom. Things definitely changed for us, a lot, like we were not our former lives anymore.

Kevin says the group lost perspective due to the non-stop touring.

We had been touring for nine years straight and it was just a matter of time before we were gonna be "fried." Nine years was a long time to be touring and we needed a break. Had we not taken a break, we probably would have self-destructed and quit the business. We were all tired. I lost both of my grandparents, Kevin and Brian lost their grandfather, Howie lost his sister, I mean, a lot of things were going on at that time. Then 9-11—it was really kinda crazy. I, for one, got into rehab."

Could you tell us more about the rehab, what personal demons you had to deal with?

The answer to any pain or anything negative that I was going through was the bottom of the bottle, or cocaine. Now I know that the answer is to let God take over my life and talk things over with my family, my girlfriend and the guys. Communication is the key to any good relationship.

What was the lowest point during that period?

During the "Black and Blue" tour I was drinking onstage. Between songs I was taking shots of tequila and Jack Daniel's. I would do cocaine before going onstage. I was a mess. I'm on my third-and-a-half year of being sober now. My life has turned around 360 degrees.

How extensive was your involvement in the making of the new album?

We all wrote during the break and I think we submitted something like 55 songs for the album. Took about a year-and-a-half to make the record. We didn't want to rush it because we wanted it to be the best record possible. We knew that if we had adequate time, we could try different producers, try different sounds and find the direction that we wanted to go. When we started recording in January 2004, we were taking an R&B direction and then in the summer we tried rock and things began to take shape until it became more of a pop-rock album.

THE BOYS—(from left) Howie, Kevin, Nick, AJ and Brian—take a pop-rock route in the new album.

OPENING TODAY

From page A2-1

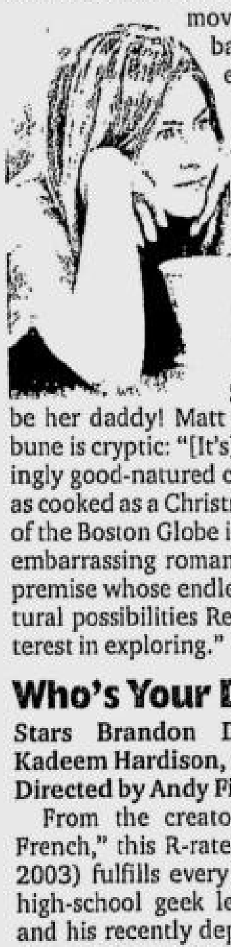
Little Manhattan

Stars Josh Hutcherson, Bradley Whitford, Cynthia Nixon, Charlie Ray
Directed by Jennifer Flackett and Mark Levin

Are romantic comedies targeting a younger audience? Ten-year-old Gabe (Hutcherson) falls in love for the first time with classmate Rosemary (Ray). He pursues and woos the girl all over the Big Apple, the "most romantic city in the world" as far as the filmmakers are concerned. Forget Paris. Sadly, his parents are on the verge of divorce. Michael Rechtshaffen of the Hollywood Reporter comments: "This ode to puppy love has its fetching moments... [and] the juvenile performances are bright and engaging... but there's an inescapable small-screen dynamic to the production." Lou Lumenick of the New York Post thinks, "It's a moderately charming comedy depicting a fumbling prepubescent [love] in a beautiful, fairy-tale version of the borough."

Rumor Has It

Stars Jennifer Aniston, Kevin Costner, Shirley MacLaine, Mark Ruffalo
Directed by Rob Reiner



Sarah (Aniston) is having a mid-life crisis and discovers that the characters in the 1967 movie "The Graduate" were based on her family. Legendary seductress Mrs. Robinson could very well be her grandma (MacLaine). More shocking, the man (Costner), with whom she was making goo-goo eyes, could very well be her daddy! Matt Pais of the Chicago Tribune is cryptic: "[It's] an unfunny and deceivingly good-natured comedy . . . as glazed and as cooked as a Christmas ham." Wesley Morris of the Boston Globe is more definite: "[It's] an embarrassing romantic comedy... has a nifty premise whose endless comic, sexual and cultural possibilities Reiner has no apparent interest in exploring."

Who's Your Daddy?

Stars Brandon Davis, Colleen Camp, Kadeem Hardison, Christine Lakin
Directed by Andy Fickman

From the creators of "Slap Her... She's French," this R-rated romp (first released in 2003) fulfills every teenage boy's fantasy. A high-school geek learns that he is adopted and his recently departed birth parents were the publishers of a vast porn empire and have left billions to him. The campus pariah then becomes the most popular hunk in town. Poor kid has to grapple not only with sudden celebrity, but also with a scheming uncle. A certain Hour.Ca web reviewer complains that it's a "mechanical and insipid comedy with a bunch of scantily clad women." An Amazon.com member asserts that it's "overly predictable... [with its] crude 'American Pie'-style humor."

From defender to accuser

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

KEEPING TRACK OF MOTHER **LILY Monteverde**'s reactions to events can be a roller-coaster ride. Before the 2005 Metro film fest opened on Dec. 25, she had to defend herself against critics who bewailed her "dominating" the festival, since she has involved as full producer or partial investor in a considerable number of festival entries.

Her retort then was that she was doing it for the festival's success, and the film fest rules had been adjusted to make something like that possible.

On point of financial profitability, she pointed out, moviemaking in the Philippines had ceased to be as attractive as it used to be. She was making more money from her other businesses, but she was still producing movies in order to help keep the desperately troubled movie industry alive.

Mother Lilly's statements didn't mollify some people who believed that the MMFF should provide a venue for a wide spectrum of producers and filmmakers.

But the festival went on regardless, and the dissenting parties held their peace—until the film fest award-winners were announced. That was when the already messy and heated situation boiled over, eliciting conflicting opinions from different sectors.

It was at this point that Mother Lily's reactions took a radically different tack, and she went from defender to accuser. While her drama, "Blue Moon" clinched the Best Picture and writing plums, she was dismayed when it didn't win the acting and directing awards, which went to people involved in a comedy and a slasher thriller.

The Regal producer was so incensed that she talked darkly about a film fest Mafia, and threatened not to join the 2006 festival if the system isn't changed.

What do we make of all this? As of this writing, we await film fest officials' response to Mother Lily's searing questions.

As for the desired radical change in the festival's system, that will take a lot of doing, since many powerful people are involved.

Reforms can be initiated only if enough similarly powerful people join forces and ask for them. Could this happen?

We're told that another producer has decided not to participate in the 2006 Metro film fest, and that a TV channel has opted not to help promote it.

Will these reports in fact come to pass? People have such short range memories and enthusiasm in these parts. Will their efforts be enough to effect the desired reforms that will make the Metro film fest truly serve the film industry and its audience?

Travel book

"THE ARCHIPELAGO Sanctuaries," the latest travel book by **Amadís Ma. Guerrero**, will be launched on Jan. 19 at the Rizal Tower (GF, Function Room Terrace), Rockwell Center, Makati. Amadís focuses on the country's Protected Areas, sanctuaries, landmarks and major resorts, from Sagada to Marawi.

Mitch Valdes' shows

MITCH **Valdes** stars in "Amor Mitch Mo" (not a Valentine show) on Jan. 20 and 21 at the Mandarin's Captain's Bar.

And, on Jan. 27, 28 and Feb 2., the show moves to the new Teatrino at the Promenade in Greenhills. Musical direction is by **Mel Villena**, direction by **Kokoy Jimenez**, and Mitch's special guest is her very own dad, **Manolo Valdes**.

Easy English seminars

CORBAN communications is slating a new series of Easy English seminars every Saturday and/or Sunday starting on Feb. 4 and 5, from 2 to 5 p.m., for students, housewives and professionals. The comprehensive package of conversation, grammar and writing runs for 30 hours. Call 8426665 or 0917-6297718.

Plinky relies on solid family support

From page A2-1

I told them I could handle it.

Your former partner claims you're mentally disturbed.

Totally not true. If he keeps saying these things, it's okay. I'm ready to face him. It's really my word against his [and] my words are backed up by documents.

Describe yourself as a mother.

Of course there's always that nurturing side of me in the beginning, but as the children become more independent and aware of things around them, I then treat them as friends, no matter how small they are. I like to joke with my kids a lot. I like to play with them. But I'm a mother who doesn't allow things to just happen. I tell them that if they're in trouble, they can come and talk to me. I [also] teach them to become analytical thinkers.

With all these goings-on, do you still have time for your 10-year-old son?

Of course. I wish I could have more time with him, and so does he. But he knows I have a court case. Because of the case, the threats to my family, my ex-husband agreed to temporarily take care of my son. Now, weekdays, he's with his father but on weekends, starting Friday, he's with me. Before this, he was with me the whole time. I have full custody.

How aware is he of the problem?

When we were preparing for the hearing, the lawyers would come and he would ask, "Are we going to win the case?" He's a bit concerned about my situation. He's actually quite wise for his age.

One day we were making an assessment, just him and I, of the situation, and he said, "You know mom, we both made a mistake. We shouldn't have allowed him to come back to our lives." He's quite grown-up that way. There's really no such thing as a perfect mother [but] I try my best.

My baby took a lot of my time in the beginning. I thought that would be a problem with my eldest son—there were days when he was upset, but he learned to take it in stride.

In fact, he was very distressed when the baby was taken away. It happened in front of him.

How do you describe yourself as a wife or a girlfriend?

I'm not the dominating type. Essentially, if my partner takes up diving, for example, I'm the type who would take it up, too. I'm very "game." I'm very bubbly. I make sure I leave work problems at the work place.

I'm not the type who likes going to bars. Maybe you'll see me in a bar twice a year. I enjoy going out to dinner [and] watching a movie is a highlight. In a way, if I were to be with someone, it would have to be someone like that.

What's a normal day like to you?

I just gave birth. The intention was for me to be a full-time mom. When that wasn't possible, I went to work two hours a day, and gradually increased it. My job is very physical (she runs a fitness center) so it wasn't possible to go on a full nine to 10 hours immediately. In a way it was sad; my partner promised that I could be a full-time mom.

When I wake up, my eldest son and I would always snuggle up, then I move to the nursery room to be with my baby.

Work finishes quite late at night. When I come home, I take over babysitting chores. If I'm lucky, I catch my eldest son still up.

There was a time when I would bring my baby to the gym. I wish I could've done that more often.

How are you coping now that your baby is not with you?

I still go to his room and go through the same ritual. It helps. Wasn't there a study explaining why you shouldn't take the baby from the mother? When you smell your baby, there's a chemical that's released within your brain called oxytocin, which makes you happy. To avoid getting depressed, I smell my baby's stuff.

Today is not a good day. I just heard that my baby is not properly taken care of. I think his father is feeding him too much meat.

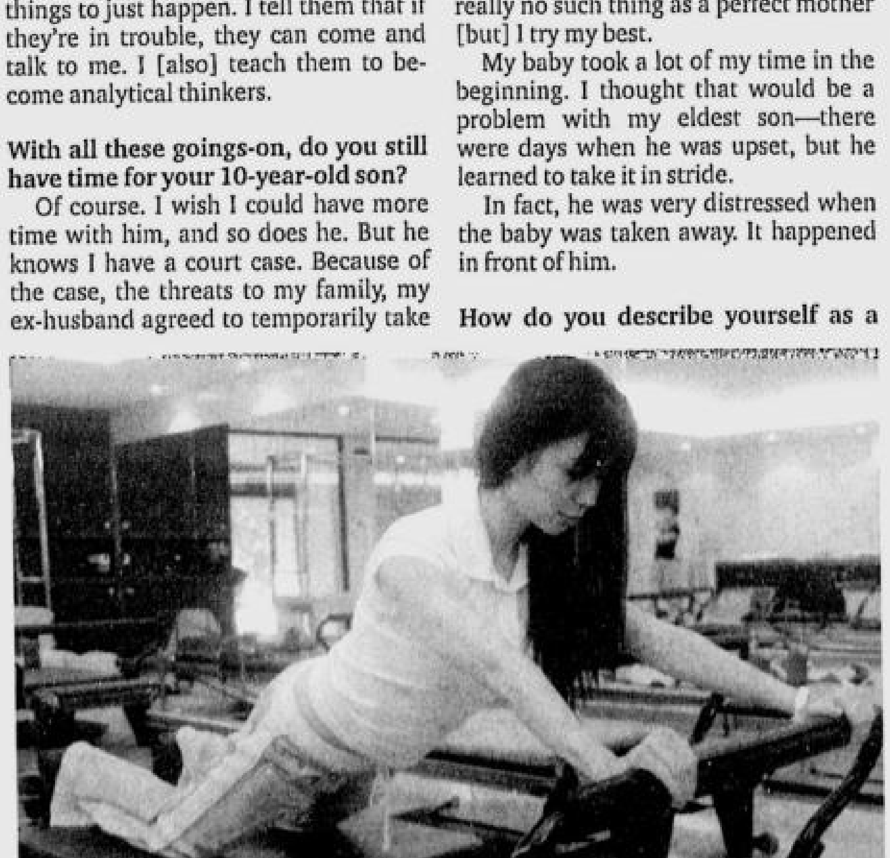
Through a common friend, I sent over his little doggie stuffed toy—his favorite—to calm him down. It's not knowing what's being done to him that's really hurting me.

I've been reading a lot, like books by Gary Zukav and Christiane Northrup, a doctor specializing in women's issues. I arm myself with the knowledge that this, too, shall pass.

I've lost a lot of weight. At night, I meditate. I also pray a lot. I'm in so much pain that it shows on my face.

Exercise also helps me focus on things other than my problems.

I meet up with my friends, only not as often as I'd like to. They are being harassed, too. And I talk to my relatives a lot. Family is the most important.



SHE says exercise helps her focus on things "other than problems."

SHE recalls that she used to bring her baby to the gym.

THE PEVENSIE kids get a crash course on courage, sacrifice, forgiveness and teamwork.

'Narnia' has big shoes to fill after 'Lord of the Rings' and 'Star Wars' but it is guaranteed a strong fan base

REVIEW

A melting pot of universal themes

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

THE COLORFUL EPIC "THE CHRONICLES of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," based on C.S. Lewis' first part in a series of popular fantasy books, finally gets its heavy-budgeted big screen treatment. This new effects-drenched movie has big shoes to fill, as recently concluded fantastical franchises like "Lord of the Rings" and "Star Wars" have left a huge void. The Disney release, however, is guaranteed a strong fan base.

"Narnia" does not didactically preach about Christian values or messages, but the allegories are there. The young characters are often and openly referred to as "sons and daughters of Adam and Eve," but the film cannot and does not claim that the lightly imparted lessons are exclusively Christian. The tale of four English children, siblings sent to live far from the chaos of World War II, explores universal themes when they discover a closet that doubles as a magic portal to the awesome fairy tale terrain of Narnia. They get a stunning crash course on the concepts of courage, sacrifice, forgiveness and, after redundant bickering, teamwork.

Narnia is a realm where they discover a black-and-white conflict between the ambitious White Witch (ever-classy Tilda Swinton) and the messiah metaphor Aslan (appropriately voiced by Liam Neeson). Aslan, the land's lion king, if you will, shows everyone—like "resurrecting" film sages Obi-Wan Kenobi and Gandalf—that there is life after heroic death. "Narnia," like the aforementioned fantasy films, draws inspiration from different ancient legends as well, combining creatures and beings from European and Asian mythologies (imagine giants, centaurs, a phoenix, a minotaur, werewolves, goblins and talking animals), which slug it out in one big hodge-podge of a battleground. Heck, even Santa Claus makes a special appearance to inspire the kids early on!

While the secret world is derivative character-wise, "Shrek" director Andrew Adamson's familiarity with making seemingly disparate elements coexist make this reality a surreal, fever dream-like mural. The story is simplistic and kid-friendly; actors William Moseley, Anna Popplewell, Skandar Keynes and Georgie Henley as the Pevensie siblings decently play brave and competent (if understandably volatile) youngsters. Swinton shines as the cardboardy villain, and is as enticingly menacing as ever.

Despite its sometimes languid pacing, "The Chronicles of Narnia" has sweeping, computer-rendered trickeries working for it, making it a cool, candy-coated place to revisit. It's nowhere near as magical or engaging as the mythical fantasy worlds that preceded it (yes, the comparisons are inevitable), but it's still a welcome, escapist "new" world.

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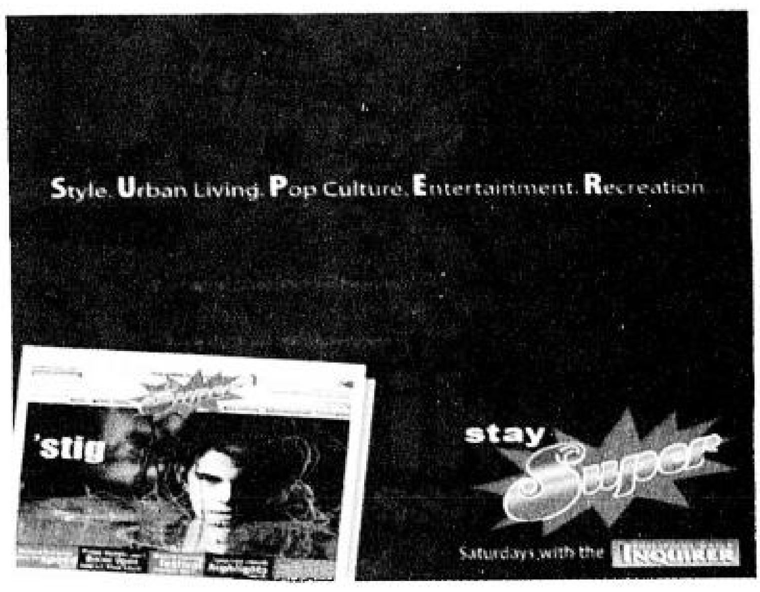
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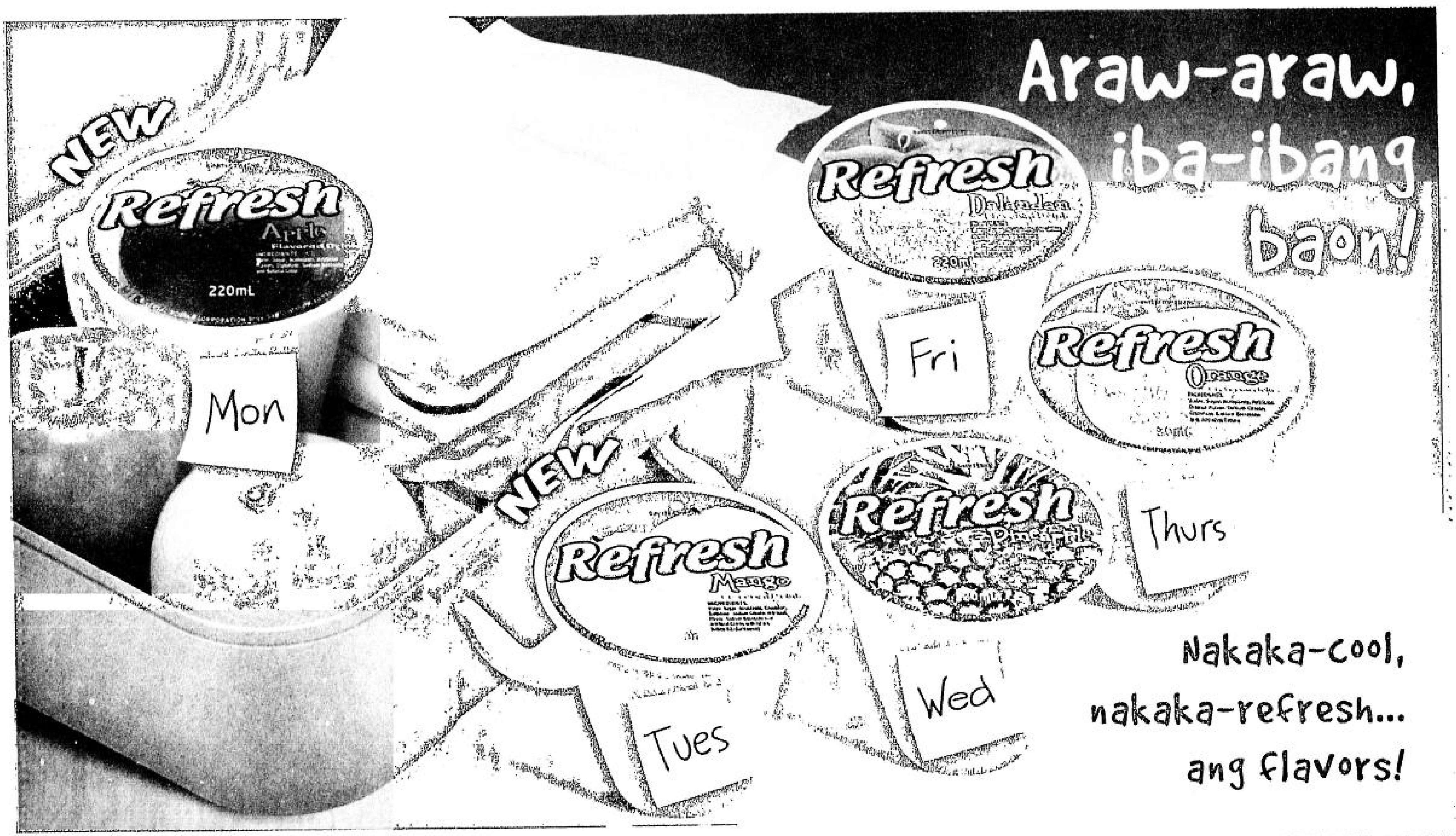
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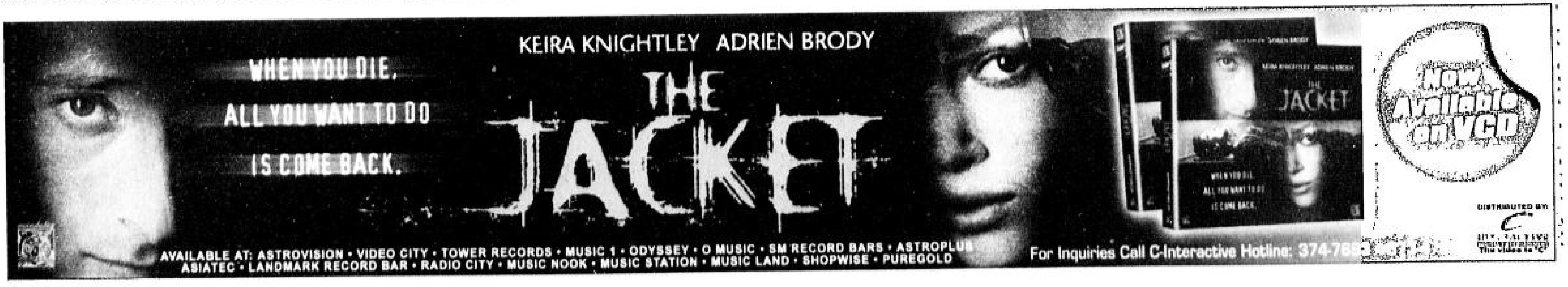
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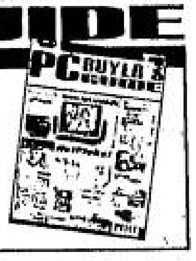


Siemens' RP unit opens 450-seat contact center

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE LOCAL UNIT OF SIEMENS AG OF GERMANY YESTERday launched its P250-million call center at the Eastwood City Cyberpark in Quezon City.

Tertius Vermeulen, Siemens president and chief executive, said during the launching rites that the company decided to put up a 450-seat call center in the country to extend its operations in Asia.

"The Philippines is the capital of the call center industry in the world, and we believe it has the strongest potential for growth," Vermeulen said.

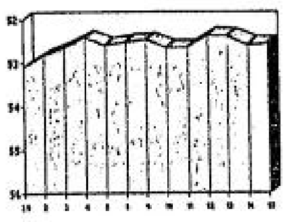
The call center is expected to double the number of seats—with the workforce reaching over 1,000—within the year once the operation goes into full swing, he added.

Christian Oecking, Siemens president for global outsourcing, explained that the call center unit was one of the group's bigger call centers worldwide

SIEMENS/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



DECEMBER JANUARY

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₱52.57 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 17, 2006

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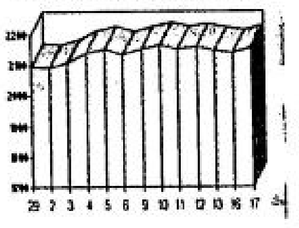
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 17, 2006

GOLD: **$558.30-558.80**

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 17, 2006

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close 0.77% higher

SHARE PRICES SNAPPED A TWO-DAY fall Tuesday, closing 0.77 percent higher on renewed interest in select blue-chips, dealers said.

They said the rise was also supported by rotational buying interest in counters that did not join the recent rally.

SHARES/ B4

HK group wants EIB among top 10 RP banks

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE LIPPO GROUP of Hong Kong is bent on turning its local banking interest Export and Industry Bank (EIB) into a major player and has hired an ex-Hong Kong Monetary Authority official to be its Philippine representative.

In an interview with the INQUIRER yesterday, former HK Monetary Authority Executive Director Albert Cheok said he would retire from his current post as chair of Bangkok Bank Berhad to focus on EIB, where the Lippo group has become the single biggest stockholder with 40-percent interest.

The Lippo group over the long haul expects EIB to be counted among the country's top 10 banks.

Cheok, who also used to be a bank official in Australia, will sit as deputy chair in EIB as part of a comprehensive restructuring program.

"The coast is now clear for EIB to move forward to become a major league player in the local banking industry," Cheok said.

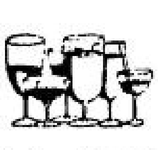
EIB obtained a P3-billion fresh capital infusion from the Lippo group and other investors and forged an agreement with the state-controlled Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. to unload P10-billion worth of bad assets which EIB inherited from the defunct Urban Bank group.

EIB, with total resources of about P28 billion, currently ranks among the country's top 25 banks.

The PDIC will purchase the bad assets

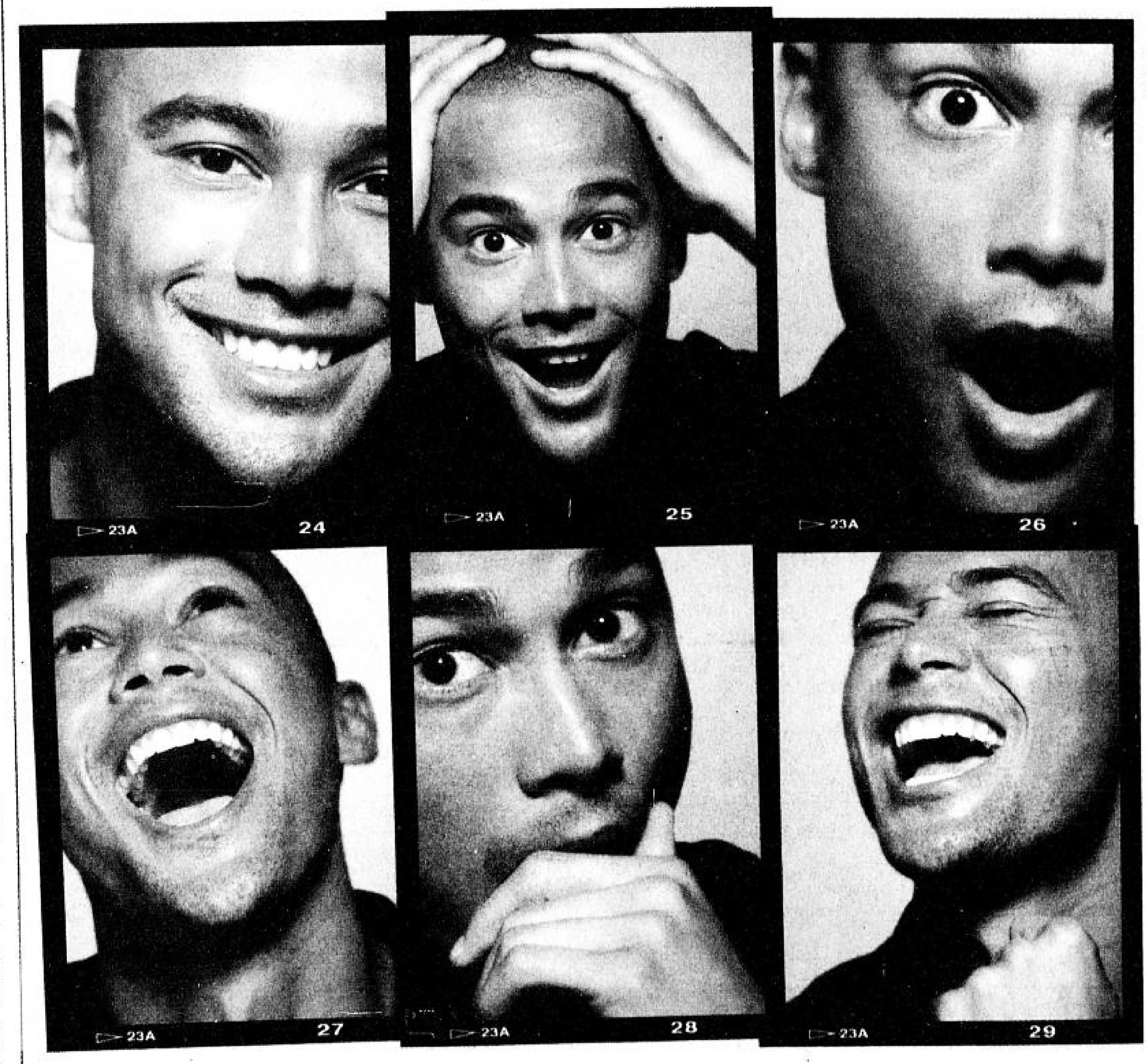
HK GROUP/ B3

WHAT'S INSIDE



Sy's other targets /B3

25 pre-need firms get licenses /B5



SURPRISINGLY VOLVO.

S60 OOOHH'S & AAHH'S

The feel for driving varies from one person to another - the character of the driver against the vehicle he drives. Below are respected motoring journalists who took the S60 T5 for a test drive. Read through and be amazed at how each writer was pleasantly and surprisingly impressed after commanding the S60 T5.

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MANNY DELOS REYES
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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CONTRIBUTOR, THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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C! MAGAZINE TEAM
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PLDT to bring mobile services to US, Middle East

Telecommunications giant to expand services in nations with thriving Filipino communities

By Clarissa S. Batino

AS SOON AS IT LAUNCHES ITS MOBILE phone services in Singapore in March this year, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. will bring its mobile services to other overseas markets with large Filipino communities.

PLDT Global Alfredo Panlilio said in an interview that the next destinations for its mobile network operations would include North America, the Middle East and Europe.

"This year, our plan is to follow where our countrymen are," said Panlilio.

Tie-ups with foreign carriers would allow PLDT and its unit, Smart Communications Inc., to offer mobile services to Filipinos abroad, including remittances through text, text messaging and voice calls.

There are at least eight million Filipinos working overseas who send a combined $12 billion to their relatives in the Philippines each year.

Of the three target markets, the United States and Canada, which essentially comprise North America, host the biggest Filipino communities.

There are more than 3.5 million Filipinos in North America, of which close to 3 million are in the US.

In the Middle East, there are more than 1.5 million and almost a million in Europe, mostly in Italy and in United Kingdom.

Panlilio said PLDT Global would also like to expand its present business, which so far had been focused on Hong Kong and Singapore.

"We are confident that our mobile services in Singapore, with the value of the PLDT and Smart brands and the uniquely Filipino features, will be a perfect fit for our OFWs," Panlilio said.

PLDT will offer Smart prepaid services in Singapore using the facilities of MobileOne or M1, the third-largest carrier there.

In September 2004, PLDT launched its first virtual mobile services in Hong Kong called 1528 Smart in partnership with CSL.

"This partnership will enable M1 to serve a very specific segment of mobile customers by leveraging on the unique competitive advantage that PLDT and Smart enjoy within the Filipino community," said M1 chief executive officer Neil Montefiore in a statement.

There are 130,000 Filipinos in Singapore and almost 200,000 in Hong Kong.

With 1528 Smart, Filipinos in Hong Kong are able to text their family in the Philippines for only 50 HK cents a message sent instead of 80 HK cents to HK$1 through other carriers, explained Panlilio.

PLDT Global is generating between HK$12 and HK$15 million a month in revenue.

Philam Plans restates commitment to planholders

Amidst the growing public concern on the pre-need industry fueled by news reports on ailing pre-need companies, Philam Plans President and CEO Jesus G. Hofileña issued to its planholders a letter of reassurance stating that "Philam Plans will meet all the contractual obligations represented in the pre-need plans that it has issued and continues to sell.The well-timed letter was appreciated by the company's 300,000 planholders who in 2005 received P484M worth of cash benefits from their maturing plans.

It should be noted that Philam Plans went against the norm in 1989 when it offered only fixed value plans. Today this model proved to be the only sustainable plan in the business putting Philam Plans in a unique position as one of the few pre-need companies that does not carry the financial burden of open-ended education plans. With fixed value plans, Philam Plans is able to determine all its future planholder obligations and consistently provide for benefits as it falls due.

Backing up the words of assurance is the company's trust fund, which continues to enjoy the highest level in the industry today. As of November 2005, Philam Plans' trust fund stood more than P19B, with over 96% secured in cash or near cash equivalent such as government securities. With very liquid and more than adequate trust funds set aside for planholder obligations, Philam Plans can pay all benefits due today and up to 2013. This trust fund has been growing at an average of 40% in the past two years aligned with growing PH obligations of the company.

The earnest desire to stay committed to the people made Philam Plans the leading pre-need company in the country today. This is reflected in the recent report of the Actuarial Advisers, Inc. dated September 2005. The watch group reported Philam Plans to have once again taken the overall lead in pre-need sales at P3.768B PNP and 23.55% market share.

Pre-need buyers have every reason to feel secured in Philam Plans, which recently infused P500M to its paid-up capitalization to further boost its capability to provide products and services that the market requires. Philam Plans now enjoys the status of having the highest paid-up capital with P700M, or seven times over the SEC minimum requirement for a pre-need company. Its continued compliance with the standards and guidelines set by the SEC paved the way for the renewal of its license and approval of its request to sell additional pre-need securities amounting to P8.5B.

Philam Plans is affiliated with Philamlife, the leading insurance company in the country and AIG, the worlds leading international insurance and financial services organization in the world. The financial might of these leading companies is ready to support Philam Plans.

"All these establish our earnestness to preserve and excel in providing essential pre-need financial planning services to you and to the Filipino community," Hofileña assures the public.

Sa Philam Plans, panatag ka.

Coconut oil exporters expect more sales from China

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL COCONUT OIL EXPORTERS ARE anticipating more foreign exchange earnings from the Chinese market as the 10-percent tariff on their products had been scrapped when the Philippine-China Early Harvest Program became effective Jan. 1.

The EHP is a preliminary arrangement between China and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in preparation for free trade by 2010.

According to the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines, the EHP leveled the field for local coconut oil exports against competition from Indonesian shipments.

Ucap executive director Yvonne Agustin said in an interview that Indonesian exporters to China used to have the advantage since they paid Chinese customs a tariff of only 5 percent or only half of what Filipino exporters paid.

"The United States and Europe are our biggest market for coconut oil exports," Agustin said. "But the expansion of our market share in China would be very welcome since this would decrease our dependence on our traditional markets."

Latest data show that China imports some 30,000 metric tons of coconut oil a year, of which shipments from the Philippines represented 15 percent.

Jesus L. Arranza, president of the Coconut Oil Refiners Association, said in a separate interview that his group was confident that local exports could match those from Indonesia in terms of volume.

"As far as available supply for exports is concerned, the Philippines has the biggest worldwide," Arranza said. "Aside from that, China's demand for any commodity has been growing significantly in the past several years.

In April 2005, the government agreed to enter an EHP with China through a framework agreement on an Asean-China Comprehensive Economic Cooperation, which paves the way for the realization of an Asean-China Free Trade Area by 2010.

The EHP gives Asean members an advance low-tariff entry before the free trade agreement takes effect, on condition that Asean markets open up to Chinese products.

Taking effect last Jan. 1, the Philipine-China EHP covers 209 tariff lines that include plant, animal and marine products.

The EHP lists the following specific products: refined but not chemically modified copra, palm kernel or babassu oil; crude oil and refined oil products; cocoa powder, with and without added sugar or other sweetening matter; and cane, osier, bamboo or similar material.

The Philippines is the last of the 10 Asean members to enter China's EHP.

The others have done so as early as 2004 and have cut tariffs on covered products to between 2 percent and 15 percent and agreed to remove these tariffs in 2006.

DOF supports transfer of pre-need firms to IC

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE WILL SUPport moves to transfer the supervision of the embattled pre-need industry from the Securities and Exchange Commission to the Insurance Commission.

The DOF said it would help lobby for the passage of any of the pending bills to reform the industry, saying pre-need reforms were part of its legislative agenda for the year.

"Functions of pre-need is actuarial in nature. The pre-need industry is better off within the mandate of the IC," Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan told reporters yesterday.

The proposal to transfer the supervision of pre-need firms to the IC was revived last year when key industry players College Assurance Plan (CAP) and Pacific Plan Inc. (PPI) suffered from financial difficulties that led to the suspension of tuition payments to its plan holders.

The DOF said in an earlier position paper that the pre-need sector was better off under the IC, which has an actuarial department.

Tan said the IC was prepared to take over the regulation of pre-need firms, although it still needed to tailor fit its services, which were designed to cover insurance firms, to cater to the needs of pre-need companies.

Aside from transferring supervision of the pre-need industry, establishing a pre-need code to regulate pre-need firms would also be supported by the DOF.

"Considering that this is a multibillion-peso industry and composed of large number of companies, the need for a legislative framework becomes imperative in order to set the standards, safeguards, rules on investments, solvency, and the overall operations of the industry," the DOF said in the position paper.

Earlier, Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo said the IC was prepared to take over the supervision of pre-need firms anytime Congress decides to pass any of the pending bills on pre-need reforms.

Siemens' RP unit . . .

From page B1

and would serve Siemen's global customers.

Oecking said Siemen's Philippine call center was the latest addition to the existing satellite call center offices of Siemens in the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Canada, Turkey and Singapore.

Siemens AG vice president Alexander Langhans said the company was "extremely satisfied" with the quality of available workers here and that it has so far hired 340 employees.

"The local employees are considered US plus, meaning, they are comparable with US resources and capabilities," Langhans said.

He also said Siemens was looking at other locations in the country for future expansion.

Outsourcing is the fastest growing industry in the Philippines, with government officials and industry players forecasting sales to grow five-fold to $12.41 billion by 2010 from $2.49 billion last year.

By February, the Philippines will have 150 call center companies. The number of seats last year rose to 70,000 from the 40,000 recorded in 2004, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

By comparison, there were 3 million seats in US-based call centers and over 200,000 in India in 2004.

Earlier this month, the US-based think tank John F. Kennedy Center Foundation-Philippines said that the fast-growing business process outsourcing and call center sector was in danger of losing steam because the supply of qualified workers was drying up.

According to the JFKCF-P, less than three out of every 100 fresh college graduates are hired in the BPO/CC industry yearly.

A JFKCF-P study showed that the declining supply of qualified workers in the sector could arrest the growth of the $10-billion industry.

The group said a solution was to adequately prepare fresh graduates for a job in a BPO firm or call center by providing them quality training, especially in arresting the declining proficiency of graduates in the English language. *With a report from AP*

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Sy's other targets

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

IT SEEMS THAT TAIPAN HENRY SY SR. HAS other sights in his investment periscope other than Equitable PCIBank. Ayala Corp., San Miguel and Belle are apparently on its slow, steady accumulation list besides Equitable PCIBank and, of course, Chinabank.

According to yearend 2005 reports, the combined shareholdings of the cash-flush taipan in the Zobel holding company have increased to nearly 4.55 percent, from 3.33 percent a year ago.

Just to give you an idea what kind of money one needs to execute a boardroom *beso-beso* with the Zobels, a one-percent stake in Ayala Corp. is worth nearly P1.16 billion at yesterday's closing price.

Theoretically, one needs about 14 percent in combined shareholdings and proxy votes to secure a seat in the seven-member Ayala board; clearly, the taipan and his heiress Teresita Sy have a long way to accumulate if the family is to replicate its entry into the San Miguel boardroom.

Incidentally, while the Sys were increasing their stake in Ayala Corp., the Gokongweis' Universal Robina Corp. had been reducing their already token hold in the Zobel company to 0.0063 percent from 0.03 percent a year ago.

And speaking of San Miguel, the taipan's SM Investments and Sysmart holding companies reported that their combined shareholdings in the country's largest food, beverage and packaging complex have topped 10.96 percent, from only 5.39 percent in end-2004.

In the property and leisure company Belle, the taipan confirmed stock market rumors that he controls nearly a quarter of the company when he disclosed that the combined stakes of Sysmart and SM Development have already reached over 22.56 percent by end-2005, from only 13.3 percent a year ago.

Sy's increasing hold in Belle and its prime project, Tagaytay Highlands, was apparently at the expense—or was it at the profit?—of Eastern Securities, controlled by Belle vice chair Willy Ocier.

Eastern Securities' share holding in Belle in 2004 was 13.68 percent; by the end of 2005, the figure had been whittled down to only 2.179 percent.

Mine sweeper

THE BUMBLING Australians in Lafayette copper and gold mine have given up management control of the Rapu-Rapu operations in favor of Carlos Dominguez Jr., the Aquino-era secretary of agriculture and also of the environment and natural resources.

Dominguez led a group of international investors in initially acquiring a 1.6-percent stake in the Australian parent company, in exchange for being named chair, CEO and president of the Philippine mining operations.

Rapu-Rapu is the first mining venture of the listed Aussie company, who in a year turned what could have been a quiet money-machine off the coast of Albay into an environmental disaster.

Hopefully, with Dominguez at the helm, the Filipinos could replicate the rehabilitation and environmental record at Pasar, the copper smelter that Dominguez also helped turned around.

Dominguez's marching order—to clean up the mining spill and placate the Bicolanos.

Heard through the grapevine

WHOLESALER Suy Sing, riding on the success of his humongous North Luzon Expressway depot, is in the midst of taking over seven shuttered/ailing Uniwide stores.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

HK group

. . . From page B1

at a discount of 70 percent, in effect paying P3 billion for the P10 billion in bad assets.

At the same time, it has agreed to provide income support to cover the discount from the sale of the assets by way of a P7-billion soft loan for 10 years, which will be fully secured by government securities.

Aside from the P3-billion core capital to be infused by the Lippo group and other investors, the PDIC will also subscribe to a P2-billion tier 2 capital in a form of interest-bearing subordinated debt, which will be payable to the deposit insurer in 10 years.

"This marks a fresh chapter in EIB's operations," Cheok said. "This package is a perfect example of how the banking authorities and major shareholders of a bank had put their minds together to address a banking issue to promote the continuing stability and efficiency of the banking system in a win-win formula."

After this restructuring program, Cheok said EIB would emerge as a "leaner, fitter and healthier" financial institution that could in the future be counted among the Philippines' top 10 banks.

The bank got a fresh capital infusion from major stockholders led by the Lippo group and the local Yao group, together with Extra Year Investments Ltd., the designated investment vehicle of the RZB group of Austria and AO Capital Partners Ltd. of Hong Kong.

The Lippo and Yao groups, who are existing stockholders in EIB, now have a 60-percent combined stake in EIB, while RZB and AO Capital, which are new investors, now own a combined 30 percent.

The Philippine Exporters Conferederation, which co-founded EIB with the Lippo group prior to the 1997 financial crisis, has seen its stake diluted to less than 10 percent.

Cheok said EIB, which now operates a network of about 50 branches, would focus on organic growth first following its major restructuring.

He added that the Lippo group had invested in the bank for the long haul, and would support its expansion.

The restructuring puts the bank on better financial footing.

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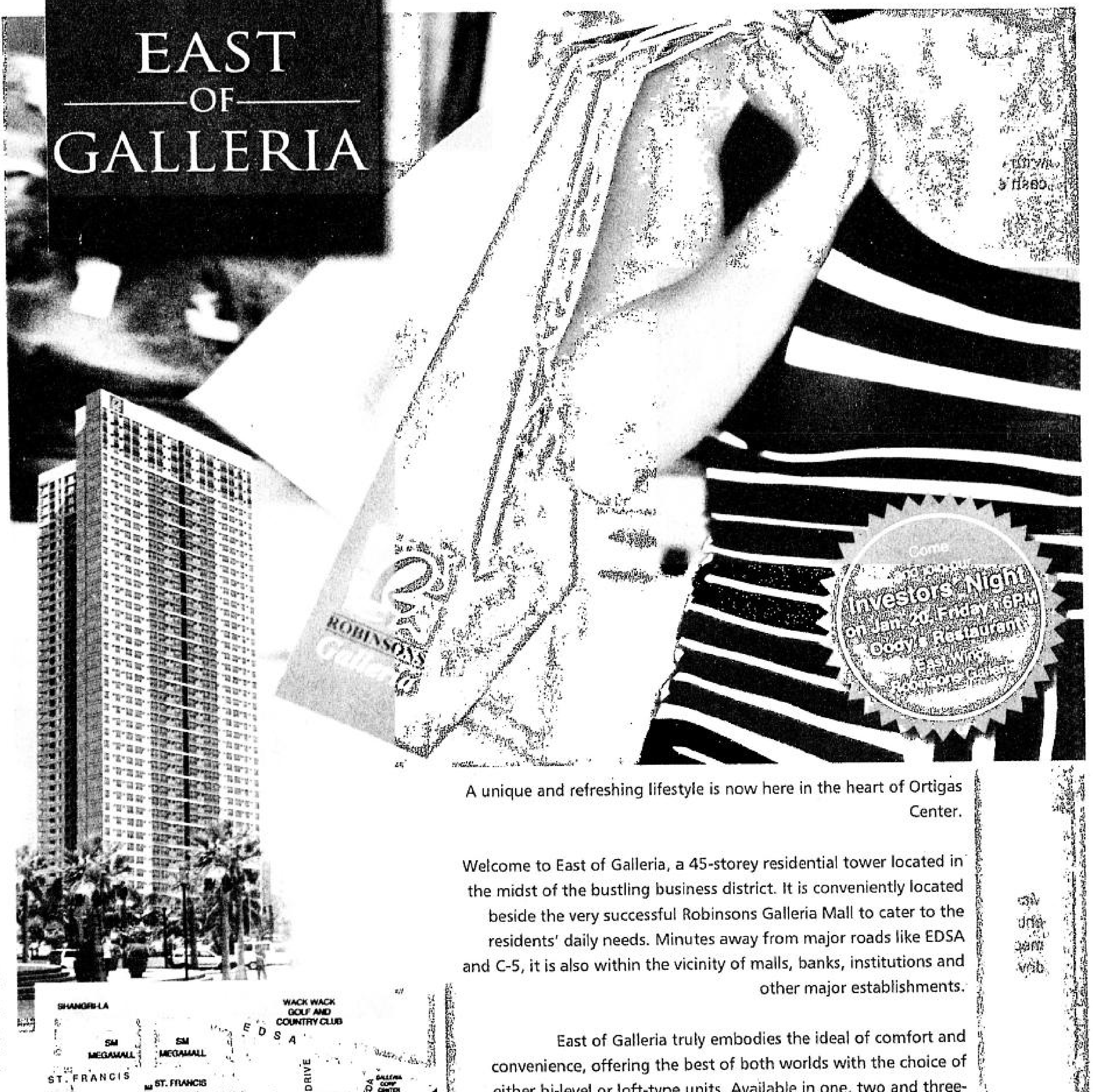

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JFC buys out partner in Greenwich

Building up cash reserves to finance expansion strategy

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FAST FOOD GIANT JOLLIBEE FOODS CORP. said it had fully acquired Greenwich Pizza Corp. by buying out its partner in the quick-service pizza and pasta chain for P384 million.

In a statement sent to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Jollibee chair Tony Tan Caktiong said the move was in line with the group's strategy to acquire businesses or additional stakes in existing businesses for consolidation into its operations.

Jollibee bought the 20-percent stake of Green Foods Franchising Inc., raising the group's holdings in the fast food pizza chain to 100 percent.

"We have been very pleased with our partnership with Green Foods Franchising Inc. over the past 11 years, starting in 1994 when JFC acquired 80 percent of Greenwich Pizza Corp. This buyout, which was arrived at in terms satisfactory to both our partner and to JFC, will add sales and profit to and will facilitate in simplifying our operations," Tan Caktiong said in the statement.

In its financial report as of September, Jollibee said Greenwich's system-wide sales—a measure of all sales to consumers from both company-owned and franchised stores—grew 4.3 percent in the third quarter ending September. No figures were specified.

Jollibee chief finance officer Ysmael Baysa said Greenwich's total sales of P3.5 billion in 2004 contributed 10 percent to Jollibee's total system-wide sales for that year.

Also, Greenwich generated P2.7 billion in revenue and P131.9 million in net income in 2004.

As of Dec. 31, Greenwich runs a total of 239 stores, of which 128 are company-owned and 111 are under franchise agreements.

Tan Caktiong also said he was confident about the long-term prospect of the Greenwich brand.

"We have built a leading brand over these years. We are confident that this brand will continue to grow robustly in the future."

Baysa also said Jollibee yesterday paid Green Foods in cash.

Jollibee has been accumulating cash reserves for its expansion strategy.

Last October, Jollibee acquired full control of Red Ribbon Bakeshop for P1.8 billion.

In March 2004, it bought 85 percent of Chinese fast food Yonghe King for $11.5 million.

The Jollibee Group, the largest fast food chain in the country, operates a total of 1,429 stores in the country and in nine countries overseas.

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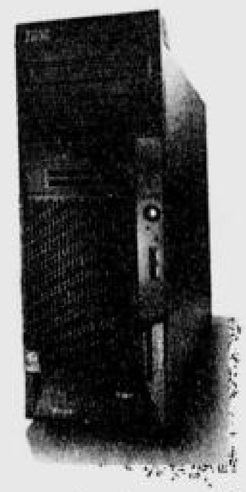

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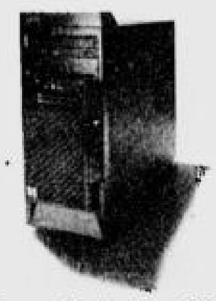

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 17, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36	36.5	36	36	505,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	56	58.5	56	58.5	2,119,100
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	62	64	62	62.5	694,600
International Exch. Bank	20.25	20.5	20.25	20.5	16,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	33	33.5	33	33	423,600
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	70	70	70	70	100
Philippine National Bank	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	17,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	14	14	14	18,300
Security Bank Corp.	36.5	37.5	36.5	37.5	664,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	32	32	31.5	32	54,300
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3150	3170	3150	3150	300
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	145	145	145	145	600
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2170	2170	2170	2170	1,220
Ivantage Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	280,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	51.5	52.5	51.5	52.5	520,200
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	14	13.75	14	17,000
Manila Electric Co. B	20	21.25	20	21.25	585,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	2,458,000
Petron Corp.	4.8	5.1	4.8	5	3,530,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	260,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	1	1	1	1	730,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	22.75	22.75	22.75	22.75	12,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	41	41	40	40.5	504,100
Pancake House Inc.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	3,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	200,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	50,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64	63	64	207,600
San Miguel Corp. B	87	87.5	87	87.5	68,500
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.3	6,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.25	18.75	18	18.75	113,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.38	0.39	0.37	0.38	4,240,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.02	1.06	1.02	1.06	5,316,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.71	0.85	0.71	0.85	50,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.45	4.6	4.45	4.6	3,518,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.9	160,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	300,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	40,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	335	337.5	335	337.5	113,560
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.54	0.56	0.54	0.55	850,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.85	4.9	4.85	4.9	452,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.024	103,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.22	2.24	2.22	2.24	1,480,000
APC Group Inc.	0.24	0.245	0.235	0.245	370,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.89	0.93	0.89	0.92	4,180,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1	4,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.14	1.18	11,341,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.15	714,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.08	1.08	100,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.3	1,382,000
Pacifica	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	5,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	2,660,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.14	1.1	1.12	135,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	4,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	1,350,000
SM Investments Corp.	238	240	238	239	71,700
South China Resources Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	50,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	200,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	320,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.25	2,077,500
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	10,000
Belle Corp.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	6,672,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	1,250,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.46	1.3	1.44	6,239,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.9	417,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.23	1,100,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.46	0.49	0.46	0.49	25,460,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	20,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.46	1.54	1.46	1.54	4,215,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	20,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.36	1.42	20,300,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.37	18,210,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	400,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	210,000
Polar Property Holdings	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6	6	6	6	20,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	200,000
SM Development Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	95,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.8	6,766,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	500,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	13,700
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.93	650,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	740	750	740	750	6,140
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.4	3.45	505,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1845	1850	1845	1850	67,260
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Ionics Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.2	113,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.05	0.0525	0.047	0.049	2,400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.055	0.05	0.055	77,800,000
Philweb Corp.	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	568,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	200,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	10.5	11.5	10.5	11.5	3,681,700
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.34	1.3	1.32	40,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.64	1.66	2,289,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	560,000
Philippine Racing Club	4.2	4.2	3.1	3.1	2,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.32	0.34	2,580,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	9	9	9	9	8,000
Far Eastern University	580	580	580	580	90
Ipeople Inc.	3.05	3.05	3	3	115,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	7	7	6.9	7	241,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	25	25	25	25	1,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.28	1.3	1.24	1.24	1,967,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.72	1.74	1.68	1.7	2,588,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	13,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6	6	5.8	6	256,000
Benguet Corp. A	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	39,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.235	0.225	0.23	5,910,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	12,460,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.018	159,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.027	11,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	37,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.46	1.5	1.46	1.48	5,067,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.22	2.3	2.22	2.28	11,782,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26	26	25	25	287,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	1,000,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	980,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.007	7,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	110,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	300,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.85	3.9	3.8	3.9	81,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series L	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	500
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	13	13	12.25	12.25	9,100

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Financial	4,797,120	228,528,625.00
Industrial	23,090,000	139,608,890.00
Holding Firms	134,377,260	89,934,325.00
Property	95,201,500	146,405,985.00
Service	659,372,890	193,914,470.00
Mining & Oil	270,027,400	59,631,950.00
GRAND TOTALS :	1,186,866,170	858,024,245.00

	AVERAGES	
Financial	638.87	UP 9.23
Industrial	3,333.88	UP 11.78
Holding Firms	1,047.73	UP 5.13
Property	868.99	UP 1.22
Service	1,019.04	UP 10.05
Mining & Oil	3,056.57	DOWN 16.24
All Shares Index	1,307.53	UP 6.38
Composite	2,154.30	UP 16.54

NO. OF ADVANCES: 52; NO. OF DECLINES: 30; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 43; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 125; NO. OF TRADES: 3,822

Shares close …

From page B1

The composite index was up 16.54 points at 2,154.30, after trading between 2,132.82 and 2,155.21. Volume turnover stood at 1.18 billion shares worth P858.5 million ($16.50 million).

The broader all-shares index advanced 10.05 points to 1,019.04.

Gainers outnumbered losers 52 to 30, while 43 stocks ended unchanged.

The peso averaged at 52.62 to the US dollar in mid-day trade.

Bank of the Philippine Islands led the risers, ending P2.50 higher at P58.50. Port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc rose P1.25 to P11.50 on speculative interest.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. ended up at P1,850, while rival Globe Telecom advanced P10 to close at P750.

Oil refiner Petron Corp gained 15 centavos to P5, in a recovery driven by rising oil prices.

Ayala Corp. rose P2.50 to P337.50, while unit Ayala Land Inc. was steady at P10.25.

A-shares of Manila Electric Co., limited to Filipino investors, ended steady at P14 while B shares ended unchanged at P21.25.

San Miguel Corp. A-shares were steady at P64, while San Migtiel B-shares retreated by 50 centavos to P87.50. *AFP*

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20-yr T-bond rate drops

By Michelle V. Remo

THE RATE ON THE 20-YEAR TREASURY bond fell by almost 2 percentage points to only 10.25 percent yesterday, due largely to high market liquidity.

The rate was 187.5 basis points lower than the 12.125 percent recorded in the auction last October.

"The market is now highly predictable given the obvious excess liquidity and their positive long-term view (on the government's fiscal situation)," said National Treasurer Omar Cruz in a press briefing after yesterday's auction.

Appetite for the long-term government security was strong, with tenders reaching P7.134 billion compared with the government's debt offering of only P4 billion.

Cruz said the liquidity in the market was boosted by the P12.4 billion worth of maturing Treasury bills and bonds this week that are expected to be reinvested in government securities.

The government accepted P4 billion worth of bids, raising in full its scheduled borrowing yesterday.

Cruz said the decline in interest rates was expected as banks remained awash with cash and as the government reduced its borrowing requirements, resulting in the possible cut in auctions of government securities.

The treasurer said he was set to announce today details of the planned adjustments in the government's domestic borrowing program.

25 pre-need firms get licenses

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION has granted 24 pre-need firms licenses to sell securities this year.

These firms are Ayala Plans Inc., Berkley International Plans Inc., CityPlans Inc., Classic Plans Inc., Eduplan (Phils) Inc., First Country Plans Inc., Himlayang Pilipino Plans Inc., Ideal Pension Plans Corp., Manulife Financial Plans, Mercantile Careplans Inc., Millenium Plans, Paz Memorial Services Inc., Permanent Plans Inc., Philam Plans, Primanila Plans, Primeplan International Corp., Provident Plans International Corp., Prudentialife Plans Inc., Sun Life Financial Plans Inc., Trusteeship Plans Inc., St. Peter Life Plan Inc., Eternal Plans, PETPlans Inc., Coplans and Grayline Plans Inc.

The list is contained in an SEC status report on pre-need dealers' licenses as of Jan. 4.

Four other applications for licenses are still being processed.

Sources said the SEC would grant licenses to all who had completed their requirements "without prejudice to penalties for violations already committed."

In a separate development, The Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies Inc. (PFPPCI) is asking the SEC for more time to adopt international accounting standards (IAS) which are to be imposed starting this year.

PFPPCI president Miguel Vazquez said the group was asking for another six months from April, when they are required to book premiums from collections as liabilities based on IAS.

SEC Chair Fe Barin said the regulator was open to giving pre-need firms more time but suggested that they start adjusting their financial reports based on these standards or perform a "dry run."

Vazquez said the increase in liabilities based on the treatment of premium collections might have an adverse impact on retained earnings.

SGV, RCBC sever ties

AUDITING FIRM SGV & CO. AND Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. have agreed to terminate their auditor-client relationship on account of their dispute over the 1997, 1998 and 1999 audits of Bankard Inc. Bankard is an acquired subsidiary of RCBC Capital Corp. which, in turn, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the bank. RCBC Capital acquired Bankard from Equitable PCIBank in May 2000.

These audits relate to Bankard's accounting policies and practices on income recognition, provisioning for doubtful accounts , and financial - statement disclosures, which RCBC Capital claimed to be non-compliant with generally accepted accounting principles. SGV denied the allegations.

Gov't urged to issue guidelines on ethanol importation this month

By Abigail L. Ho

FACED WITH A NEARLY DEPLETED ETHANOL supply and the possible ceasing of its ethanol-blended gasoline program, Seaoil Petroleum Corp. is urging the government to finalize the guidelines governing ethanol importation before the end of the month.

Seaoil president Glenn Yu said the government, led by the Department of Energy, should now issue the ethanol importation guidelines so it could prepare for its next shipment and prevent the suspension of the company's gasoline-blending program.

Based on current demand, he said Seaoil's in-country ethanol supply could be stretched up to the end of March. "After that, we won't be able to address demand anymore."

However, it would be best to have the importation guidelines ready before the end of this month so the oil firm could start making arrangements with its suppliers.

"Before we can make arrangements with our supplier, we need to have the guidelines so our supplier can comply with whatever technical specifications there are," he told the INQUIRER.

He said Seaoil had written Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla informing him of the need for the guidelines and of the scenario should the guidelines not be issued on time.

Up to now, however, the oil firm has not received any response and the guidelines has yet to be issued, he said.

"We're really just waiting for the (Department of Energy) as to how they'd want us to proceed. After the first shipment, there were feedback for various government agencies calling for a clearer set of guidelines.

They said the guidelines should include feedback from the Department of Finance, Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs," he said.

To jumpstart the country's bio-ethanol fuel program, President Macapagal-Arroyo on July 22 issued EO 449, reducing the tariff on bio-ethanol imports from 10 percent to only 1 percent.

Covered by the tariff reduction are bio-ethanol imports to be used for the government's Fuel Ethanol Program.

FirstGen profit hits ₱3.65B

FIRST GEN CORP., the power generation unit of the Lopez Group, said its consolidated net income decreased by 1.4 percent in the first nine months ending September 2005 to P3.65 billion from P3.7 billion in the same period in 2004.

Cost and operating expenses grew 28.6 percent to P26 billion during the period from P20.3 billion in 2004 due to the spike in power plant operation and maintenance costs. This was contained in First Gen's consolidated income statement in a prospectus submitted to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Power plant operation and maintenance expenses ballooned 31.9 percent to P22.4 billion due to higher average dispatch rates for its power plants in Sta. Rita and San Lorenzo in Batangas City.

Fuel expenses for its Sta. Rita power plant swelled by 30 percent to P13.6 billion as of the nine month period due to higher demand from affiliate power distributor Manila Electric Co. (Meralco).

Fuel expenses for its San Lorenzo plant increased in the first nine months to P6.8 billion from P4.6 billion due to higher average gas prices.

Revenues in the nine-month period surged 19.1 percent to P33.73 billion in the first nine months from P28.3 billion in the previous year.

First Gen is holding its initial public offering on Feb. 10.

It has set its offer price at between P51 and P62 a share.

First Gen hopes to raise P11.2 billion through the sale of 180.9 million to 219.9 million new shares.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

CURRENCIES

January 17, 2006

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.824810	1.000000	52.4530
Japan	Yen	0.007181	0.008706	0.4567
United Kingdom	Pound	1.458430	1.768200	92.7474
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106385	0.128981	6.7654
Switzerland	Franc	0.644837	0.781800	41.0078
Canada	Dollar	0.712333	0.863632	45.3001
Singapore	Dollar	0.504903	0.612145	32.1088
Australia	Dollar	0.621841	0.753920	39.5454
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.188348	2.653153	139.1658
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.219920	0.266631	13.9856
Brunei	Dollar	0.503363	0.610277	32.0109
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000087	0.000106	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.020803	0.025221	1.3229
UAE	Dirham	0.224573	0.272272	14.2815
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.212400	63.5940
Argentina	Peso	0.271542	0.329218	17.2685
Brazil	Real	0.362953	0.440044	23.0816
Denmark	Kroner	0.134043	0.162514	8.5243
India	Rupee	0.018678	0.022645	1.1878
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220302	0.267094	14.0099
Mexico	New Peso	0.078285	0.094913	4.9785
New Zealand	Dollar	0.574981	0.697107	36.5654
Norway	Kroner	0.123916	0.150236	7.8803
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013777	0.016703	0.8761
South Africa	Rand	0.138251	0.167616	8.7920
Korea	Won	0.000840	0.001018	0.0534
Sweden	Kroner	0.107187	0.129953	6.8164
Syria	Pound	0.015889	0.019264	1.0105
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025872	0.031367	1.6453
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000384	0.000466	0.0244

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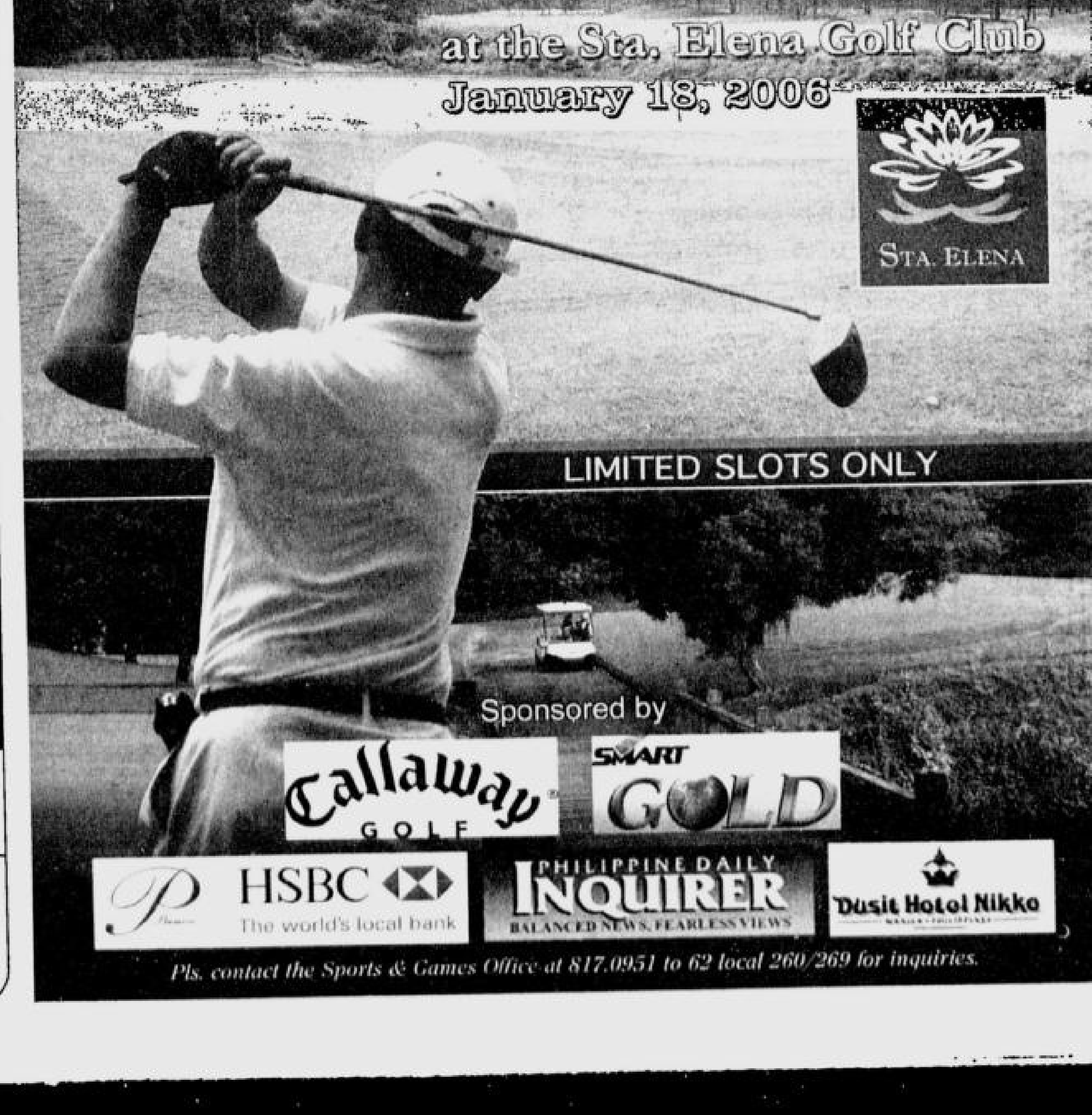
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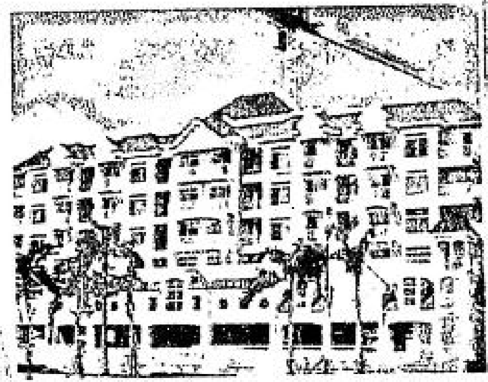

Crown Asia's first themed communities

Cottonwoods: American inspired Antipolo community, with new phases opened in the tree studded hills. ***Citta Italia:*** Our Italian community transforming into a beautiful township in Imus, Cavite. ***Maia Alta:*** Beautiful Antipolo hills graciously host this growing Italian village, likewise blossoming into a new community. ***Fortezza:*** This gated community in Cabuyao, Laguna clearly echoes Mediterranean aesthetics.

Our Property Management Value: Elegance is maintenance.

Crown Asia "walks the talk" with fastidious maintenance and homeowner assistance to maintain the levels of satisfaction, which will continue to draw new home planners to us .

And the beat goes on as we go vertical.

Our first vertical development ***Presidio*** by Laguna de Bay, is quickly rising to fruition. Following our Crown Asia value system, ***Presidio*** is a far cry from "concrete jungle" condo townships. With a design that reflects the location's environmental sensitivity, all new ***Presidio*** projects will carry this value.

A glimpse of what's coming up.

Crown Asia's new breakthrough design developments

Ponticelli: in Alabang-Daang Hari, romances the celebrated gourmet regions of Italy with breakthrough homes from P3.5 to P7M. ***La Scala***: in Quezon City, classic lines with a youthful Italian accent. A haven for young couples and urbanites, with homes ranging from P3.5M to P7M. ***Presidio New Manila***: Ideal mix of stylish practicality with prime location, offering studio up to 2-bedroom units from P1.4M to P3M. ***Assumption Heights***: Highly exclusive community with the air of an old ivy league township.

Setting new standards in property development

In our second decade, we will remain as competitive as we started. This passion we have at Crown Asia benefits our homeowners first and foremost. Our drive for excellence delights our partners, nationwide and worldwide. Crown Asia homes have been marketed in Southeast Asia, Europe, the Middle East and now in North America and the Pacific Isles.

Crown Asia residences, cherished by old and new home owners, carry values over and above the stone, glass, wood and tile they are made of.

Our new value system that revolutionized property development with beautiful homes that showcase the success of their owners.

Knowing the very universal core values of home planners, "home is one's castle", plus the Filipino's penchant for an outstanding home, we wrote the book of home development values, which most developers seem to be following today. From the choice of location, the theme, the landscaping and lastly our passion for details, is it any wonder that our homes bear a luxurious elegance.

Crown Asia's new projects

Valenza: Facing Tagayatay Ridge in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. ***Mille Luce:*** High above the city lights and under the Antipolo stars. ***Woodberry:*** Neo-American hillside enclave in Antipolo. ***Amici:*** Brings friendly elegance and affordability to Daang Hari with its prime location. ***Amalfi:*** A unique community of island lots in Dasmarinas, Cavite, with St.Paul's so conveniently close.

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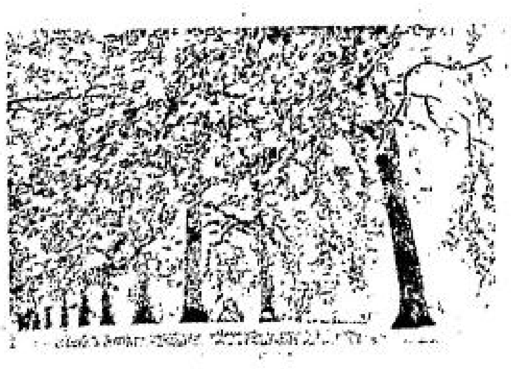

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Crown Asia's Presidio: Dreams timely fulfilled

A 6.8 hectare "city by the bay," Presidio at Brittany Bay draws inspiration from San Francisco's neo-Victorian architecture

For active urbanites, selecting a residential community can be a meticulous process, requiring a find that will reflect their discerning tastes and needs and fast lifestyle. Thus their real estate company of choice should be able to deliver its developments on time and according to the buyer's high expectations.

Already known for its 10-year track record for creating master-planned neighborhoods and building quality homes, Crown Asia further redefines urban living with the creation of its first vertical project, Presidio at Brittany Bay. The dreams of hundreds of families will soon be fulfilled with the full blown construction of the Da Vinci Tower, Presidio's first tower to be promptly delivered to its homeowners by March 2006.

A recently held topping off ceremony celebrated Crown Asia's triumph at ensuring the right-on-schedule construction of the first tower. Major partners, project consultants, and Crown Asia division heads joined the festivities while a spectacular fireworks display announced the timely success of Presidio's Da Vinci Tower.

A 6.8 hectare "city by the bay," Presidio at Brittany Bay draws inspiration from San Francisco's neo-Victorian architecture to create its symphony of 16 towers interplaying in height and size with its selection of low- and mid-rise condominiums. The self contained multi-level hub by the bay is a manifestation of the typical urbanites' thriving careers and busy lifestyles.

Presidio caters to progressive urban living with its selection of commercial and residential condominiums starting with 5 model towers to choose from:

Da Vinci Tower

Presidio's first tower already under construction, the Da Vinci is a comfortable, charming mixed-use condo with creative space utilization suited for professional singles or young families. Commercial areas occupy the ground level of the 5 storey condo, with 2 models units available in 42 sq. m. and 56 sq. m. floor area priced at Php 1.8 million and Php 2.6 million respectively; or one can opt to combine 2 or more adjacent units.

Michelangelo Tower

A 10-storey versatile garden condo high-rise, the Michelangelo Tower offers the largest selection of model units: the typical model units suited for independent individuals, ranging from 28-39 sq. m. floor area with 1 bedroom; the loft-type or bi-level units provided with elegant floor design and garden units, ranging from 50-68 sq. m. available in 1-3 bedroom cuts; and the penthouse units equipped with expansive living space, ranging from 55-75 sq. m. floor area with 1-2 bedrooms. Prices range from Php 1.4 – 5 million.

Jerry Navarrete, president of Crown Asia, Paolo Villar, chief finance officer, and guest of honor Marilen Posadas cut the ribbon at the groundbreaking ceremony.

Rembrandt Tower

Another mixed-use condo of ingenious design and architecture, the Rembrandt presents a feeling of exclusivity and avoids clutter with only 5 units per floor. It also provides the luxury of bigger unit sizes, the inclusion of basic appliances along with added features.

Picasso Tower

A prestigious garden condo residence with highlights such as walkways left open to cool air and surrounded by lush greens. The garden-inspired Picasso Tower, is a 3-winged 7-storey development with model units available in 39 sq. m. floor area with 1 bedroom and 51 sq. m. with 2 bedrooms. Prices range from Php 1.7 -2.3 million.

Monet Tower

Completing this "city by the bay" is the Monet, the tallest among the y-shaped garden condo rise found in the heart of the development. Its 3-winged 12-storey structure offers the best vista of the bay and mountains.

Officers, partners and consultants of Crown Asia celebrate the groundbreaking of Presidio's Picasso Tower.

Soon to Launch 2 more Towers: *Renoir & Bellini*

The market's great reception of Presidio is testament to the growing list of career-driven urbanites and families dreaming of a themed home and comfortable lifestyle.

- Presidio is distinguished from other space-deprived condominiums with the incorporation of nature with the practicality of vertical living. Residents enjoy the constant cool breeze from Laguna de Bay and watch the sun rising behind the Sierra Madre mountain. Unspoiled nature is married with lush landscaping and courtyards surrounding the community, and with quaint gardens in select units.

Located at the boundary of bustling Sucat and thriving City of Taguig, Presidio's convenient location is only 5 minutes away from Alabang, 15 minutes from NAIA, 20 minutes from Makati and Global City, and a mere 30 minute drive from Ortigas; via South Super Highway and C5. Upon completion of the C-6 construction travel time will be cut by half; while rehabilitation and modernization of the South Metro Rail Transit System will reduce travel time from Caloocan to Alabang to 30 minutes.

Guiding the thoughtful and effective master-planning of Crown Asia's every project are the 5 core values they persistently adhere to: greenery, security, choices, serenity and attainability.
Experience the affordable luxury of city living by the lake when you visit Presidio at Brittany Bay.

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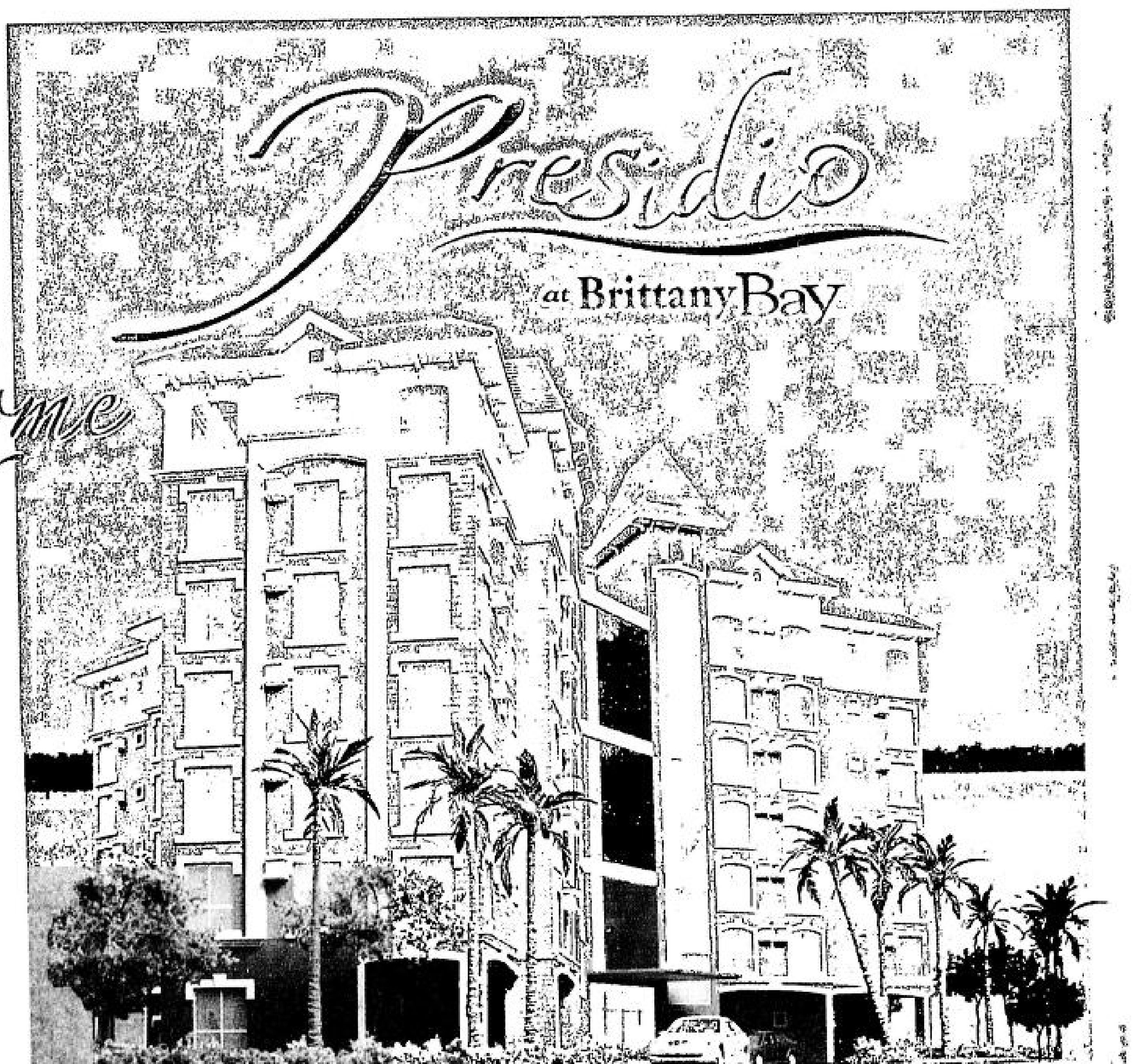

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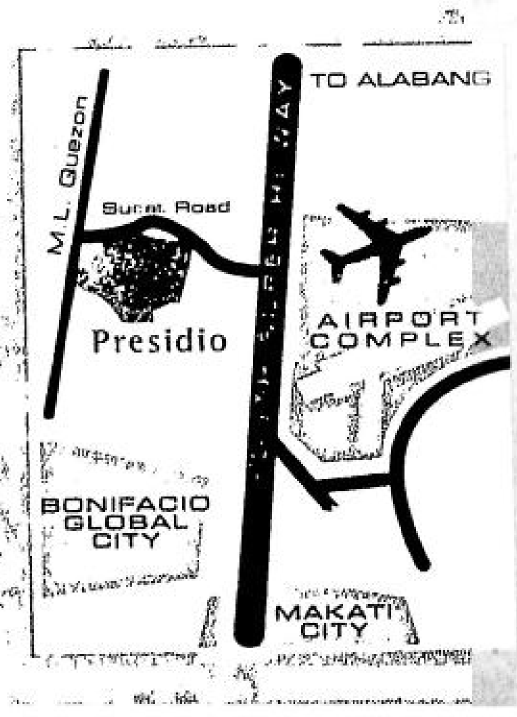

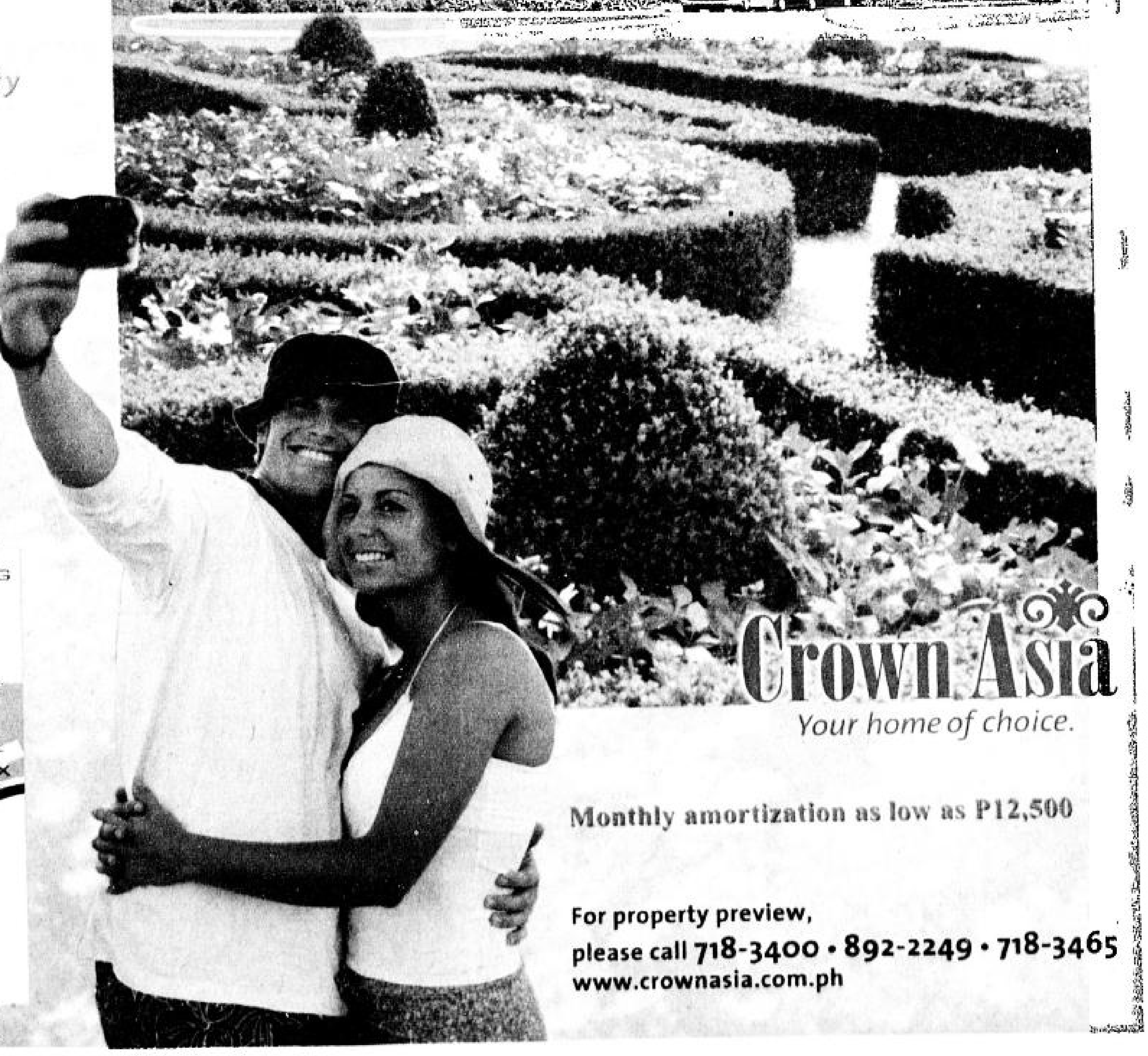

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Notice is hereby given of the extrajudicial settlement of motor vehicle with absolute sale of the late ADRIANO ROMEN has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs per Doc No. 49; Page No. 10; Book No. 29; Series of 2005 before notary public Julietta Villa Zafra of Cavite City (PDI-Jan.18, 2006)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Alfredo Abiera & Jessie Abiera was extrajudicially settled by their heirs before Notary Public Atty. Thomas M. Valmonte of Valenzuela City per Doc. No. 467, Page No. 90, Book No. II, Series of 2006. (PDI-Jan. 11, 18 & 25, 2006)

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			Pre-bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
Supply, delivery & installation of modular furniture & accessories for SSS La Union Branch: • Lot I (System Furniture) • Lot II (Contract/Custom Built Furniture) • Lot III (Seating) • Lot IV (Metal Works)	P2,341,562.00 CAPEX – Building Construction	30 calendar days	Jan. 30, 2006 3:30p.m	Feb 10, 2006 3:30p.m	P1,000.00
Manufacture & delivery of Employer Registration Plates (375,000 pcs. @ P140.00/plate) and Compliance Stickers (375,000 pcs. @ P20.00/sticker)	P60,000,000.00 Interim Budget	45 calendar days	Feb. 03, 2006 2:00p.m	Feb. 17, 2006 2:00p.m.	P50,000.00
Supply, delivery & installation of 2 units Web Server & 1 unit Content Switching Solution: • Hardware/Software – P1,835,130.00 • 3-year Maintenance – P550,539.00	P2,385,669.00 Web Enhancement Project & OPEX – MR – Computer Equipment	30 calendar days	Feb. 03, 2006 2:30p.m.	Feb. 17, 2006 2:30p.m.	P1,000.00
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1. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. Supply, delivery and installation of the GOODS is required within the period specified above after contract signing/receipt of purchase order or Notice to Proceed (NTP) whichever comes first. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/ sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section I of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the *SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee. The method of payment will be on a cash basis payable at the SSS Cashiering Department, SSS Main Bldg., Ground floor, upon accomplishment of SSS Form R-6. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Building on the deadline specified above. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in a form and amount indicated in the Bid Tender Documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be held at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the given address.
9. The *SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bid and Awards Committee
The Secretariat
6th Floor, SSS Main Building
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel # 922-2991; 924-7380; 920-6401 local 5491
Email -- bac@sss.gov.ph
Facsimile number – (02) 924-7380

THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI--Jan. 18, 2006)

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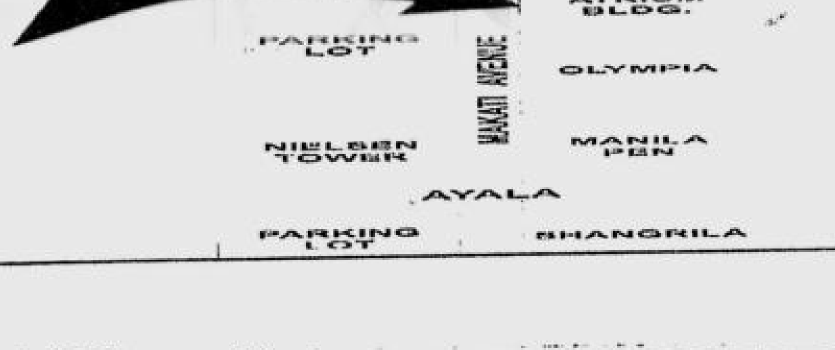

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*"May God keep you in the palm of His hand,
until we meet again."*

Second Death Anniversary

DR. HERMINIO A. ASTORGA

Former Vice Mayor, City of Manila
December 22, 1929 – January 19, 2004

On the occasion of his **Second Death Anniversary**, his wife, **Lynn Ira Vicente**, their children and their families request friends, family and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Masses will be celebrated for his intention at the following churches on Thursday, January 19th, 2006:

Malate Catholic Church	7:00 am and 6:00 pm
Ermita Catholic Church	7:30 am and 6:00 pm
St. Anthony of Padua Parish Church – Singalong	6:00 am and 6:00 pm
Our Lady of the Assumption Parish Church – Leveriza	6:00 am and 6:15 pm
St. John Bosco Parish Church – Makati	6:00 pm
Ascension of Our Lord Parish Church – Parañaque	6:30 pm
Villa San Miguel – Mandaluyong	6:45 am
EDSA Shrine – Mandaluyong	5:30 pm
Christ the King Church – Green Meadows, Pasig	7:00 am
St. John Roman Catholic Church – Allentown, New Jersey	8:00 am
St. Peter the Apostle Church – New Brunswick, New Jersey	7:30 am
St. Mary's Church – Uxbridge, Massachusetts	7:00a m
St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church – Toronto, Canada	7:00 am
St. Ignatius Catholic Church – Winnipeg, Canada	7:15 am

"We miss you, **Dad**. You will always be in our hearts."

Though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 4:16

JESUS A. OLEGA JR.

*Peacefully joined our Lord
on January 15, 2006, at the age of 76.*

His wife **Adoracion**; children **Helena**, **Roel**, **Therese** and **Peter**, **Divina**, **Gilbert** and **Julie**, and **Allan** and **Sally**; grandchildren **William**, **Joshua**, **Jason**, **Darius**, **James** and **Justin**; brothers **Eufemio**, **Bernardino** and **Gregorio**, sisters **Pureza**, **Remedios** and **Lina**, and all his relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park in Sucat, Paranaque.

Interment details will be announced later.

MIGUEL LEGASPI MEJIA

*was called home to the Lord
on January 15, 2006 at the age of 79.*

He shall be missed by his dearest wife **Chabeng**; children **Amie & King**, **Mel & Evelyn**, **Loida & Bobbit**, **Cristy & Nap**, **Alice & Roy**, **Ariel & Arlene**, **Mannix & Cathy**, **Viki & Ced**; grandchildren & great grandchildren, relatives and friends.

His remains lie in state at **Capilla D of Arlington East, The Garden Chapels, 1354 C. Raymundo Avenue corner Mercedes Avenue, Pasig City.**

Interment will be announced later.

Our Beloved

HONESTO TOPACIO DARVIN

of Imus, Cavite

*Peacefully joined our Creator on January 15, 2006
at the age of 85.*

He is survived by his loving wife **Luisa**; children, **Melito**, **Liberty**, **Robert** and **Eileen**; sister **Natividad**; children-in-law, **Rosario Anna**, **Verna** and **Mateo Jr.**; and grandchildren, **Adrian**, **Shannine**, **Andrei Joseph** and **Mary Louise**.

His remains lie in state at the Funeraria Sapinoso Premiere Chapel, Gen. E. Topacio St., Imus, Cavite. Interment will be on Saturday, January 21, 2006 at Imus, Cavite after the 2:15 p.m. Mass at the Imus Cathedral.

The family would like to request pious readers to remember him in their prayers.

---

*"I am the way, the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except
through Me."*

John 14:6

ANNOUNCEMENT

Change of Funeral Schedule

The Requiem Mass for

Ladislawa Inquimboy Alcantara

Who lies in state at the
Santuario de San Antonio,
Forbes Park, Makati

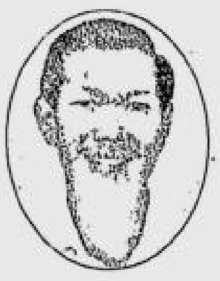
Will be celebrated

on

January 19, 2006 at 9:00 AM

Interment shall follow at the
Manila Memorial Park,
Sucat, Parañaque.

"I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies;
And whoever believes in Me will never die"



**Lovingly Remembered
The 7th Death Anniversary**
January 19, 1945 – January 18, 1999

Jonathan Matthew Tee

**Please say a prayer for the eternal repose of his soul
Linda, Jet-jet, Bernie and Charlotte**

The Holy Mass will be offered today, January 18th at the following churches:

St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Parish, Magallanes Village	7:00 am & 6:00 pm
Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan	7:15 am & 6:15 pm
Mary the Queen Parish, Greenhills, San Juan	6:00 & 7:00 am & 6:00 pm
St. Francis of Assisi Parish Church, Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong	7:00 am & 6:00 pm
Redemptorist Church, Baclaran	6:15 am & 5:30 pm

---

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❷ Any Identification document (I.D.)

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R.I.P.

CIPRIANO R. DE LA REA

(Sept. 26, 1918 – Jan. 12, 2006)
of
Silang, Cavite

His bereaved wife, **Francisca Asiñas**; children, **Vicki**, **Veronica**, **PRC Commissioner Avelina** and **TONY BOY**; son-in-law, **Carl Victor Eurton**, his brothers and sister, **Eulalio** (†), **Nurberto** (†), **Epifania** and **Marcelino** (†), relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Interment is on Saturday, January 21 at the Silang Memorial Gardens after the necrological service at the Silang Catholic Church at 3 pm.

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BIR: Effect of VAT cap on buyers depends on assemblers, dealers

By Tessa R. Salazar

(Conclusion)

LAST WEEK, CAMPI (Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc.) announced that the 70 percent VAT cap provision was "anti growth," adding that "the low cap would definitely cause difficulties among assemblers and dealers nationwide."

Campi also said that for car assemblers faced with unstable or decreasing sales volumes, the quarterly output tax would expectedly be lower than the cumulative input tax due to inventories, especially during launches of new products.

The output tax is the tax on the sales of the company. The input tax is tax based on the purchases of the company, and on other costs of conducting businesses. Deducting the input tax from the output tax would result to VAT payable by the company.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue, as the implememter of tax laws, explains the 70 percent VAT cap provision.

In a situation where the input is greater than the output, lawyer Nelson Aspe, member of the BIR VAT review committee, presents a specific example.

Suppose a car dealer buys 10 cars from the assembler worth P11 million including VAT (input tax would be P1 million, or 10 percent of P10 million) and then sells only two cars on the same month.

"Assuming that P300,000 is the output tax for the two units sold. With the new 70 percent VAT cap provision, the car dealer is only entitled to deduct 70 percent from the output tax. Seventy percent of P300,000 is P210,000.

"This means the car dealer has to pay the BIR P90,000 more."

In the meantime, the car dealer deducts the P210,000 from P1 million, which still leaves a difference of P790,000. "The car dealer would be able to use that amount as deduction or as credit later, next month, when he would be able to sell more cars," said Aspe.

Still applicable

Assuming the car dealer didn't purchase more cars from the manufacturer the following month since the dealership still has eight units to sell, and then eventually sells four units more with an output tax of P150,000 each car unit (for a total output tax of P600,000), the cap is still applicable on that following month, Aspe stresses.

With the output tax of P600,000, 70 percent, or P420,000, would be the amount deducted from P790,000 (the car dealer's remaining available input tax carried over from the previous month).

The remainder, or P370,000, will now have to be carried over to the next month, with four more units still left unsold. In the end, assuming the dealer was able to sell the remaining four units (with P600,000 total output tax, the P370,000 will be deducted from it. The dealer will be paying P230,000 in taxes.

For the meantime, Aspe advises members of the automotive business to be in constant dialogue with each other so they would be able to provide solutions to their industry, and come up with ways to increase the demand for cars.

How this affects car buyers remains to be seen, as it would depend on the decision of the carmakers and car dealers, Aspe says.

The Vios defends a title

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

WHEN THE TOYOTA VIOS WON the Best Subcompact Car Award in the Car of the Year-Philippines (Coty-P) last year, it bested four other cars in the 1.0-1.5 liter segment. This year, the Vios will defend its title against a wider array of six competitors in the subcompact class: the Chevrolet Aveo, Honda City, Honda Jazz, Hyundai Getz, Hyundai Accent and Kia Picanto.

The Vios appears ready for the challenge, having been revitalized last November with some exterior and interior changes for the 2006 model year. For starters, a new front grille with more chrome trim, new headlamps, new round fog lamps and a new front bumper with air intakes refresh the Vios' façade.

15-inch wheels

New seven-spoke 185/60R 15-inch wheels not only enhance the 1.5-liter Vios' sporty look, but—more importantly—also improve its cornering ability. The 1.3 Vios' wheels have been upgraded, too, with eight-spoke 14-inch alloys.

Viewing the '06 Vios from the side, you will immediately notice new chrome strips on the doors' side moldings and new side turn signal lamps on the front fenders. The exterior revisions are punctuated by a Euro-style pole antenna on the roof above the rear windshield and new rear combination lamps with a 3D reflex reflector that improves the car's visibility to those driving behind it.

Inside the cabin, the major changes/additions are a new seat fabric material with an accent color, a height adapter for the driver's seat, a convenient console box lid, a utility or storage tray under the front passenger seat and a pair of cupholders for back seat passengers.

Upgraded

The audio system in the 1.5 Vios has been upgraded to a Fujitsu-Ten 2-DIN single in-dash CD player with MP3 tuner and four speakers. We checked it out and rated the sounds as good as those in more expensive cars.

The color shade of the center-mounted digital instrument cluster display has been changed to make the gauges easier to read. No other car, except the Toyota Echo which the Vios replaced in 2003, has the instrument cluster smack dab in the middle of the dash. A strange location for the gauges, but after some time you get used to it.

More important than the cosmetic changes is the addition of a driver's side airbag and ABS with Electronic Brakeforce Distribution in the 1.5 Vios, safety features that it lacked when it was launched in 2003. Also new are the keyless entry system and illuminated entry system for both the 1.5 and 1.3 variants. The Global Outstanding Assessment (GOA) body, side-impact beams, head-impact protection, whiplash injury-lessening seats and front and rear 3-point ELR seatbelts remain as standard equipment.

Winning formula

Fortunately, Toyota decided to keep the winning formula that has made the Vios the subcompact market leader since its intro three years ago. The drive train and suspension system have been retained, so you can choose either a 1.5-liter engine producing 107 hp/6,000 rpm and 142 Newton-meters of torque at 4200, or a 1.3 liter capable of 85 hp/6,000 rpm and 122 Nm of torque. Whichever you choose, you get Toyota's bonus of Variable Valve Timing-intelligent (VVT-i) technology.

The Vios' sporty handling and excellent ride quality are attributed to stabilizer bars in the suspension front and rear with MacPherson struts up front and ETA beam at the rear. The 1.5-liter Vios is offered with either a smooth-shifting 4-speed automatic or a 5-speed manual transmission while the 1.3 variant has only the latter.

Size

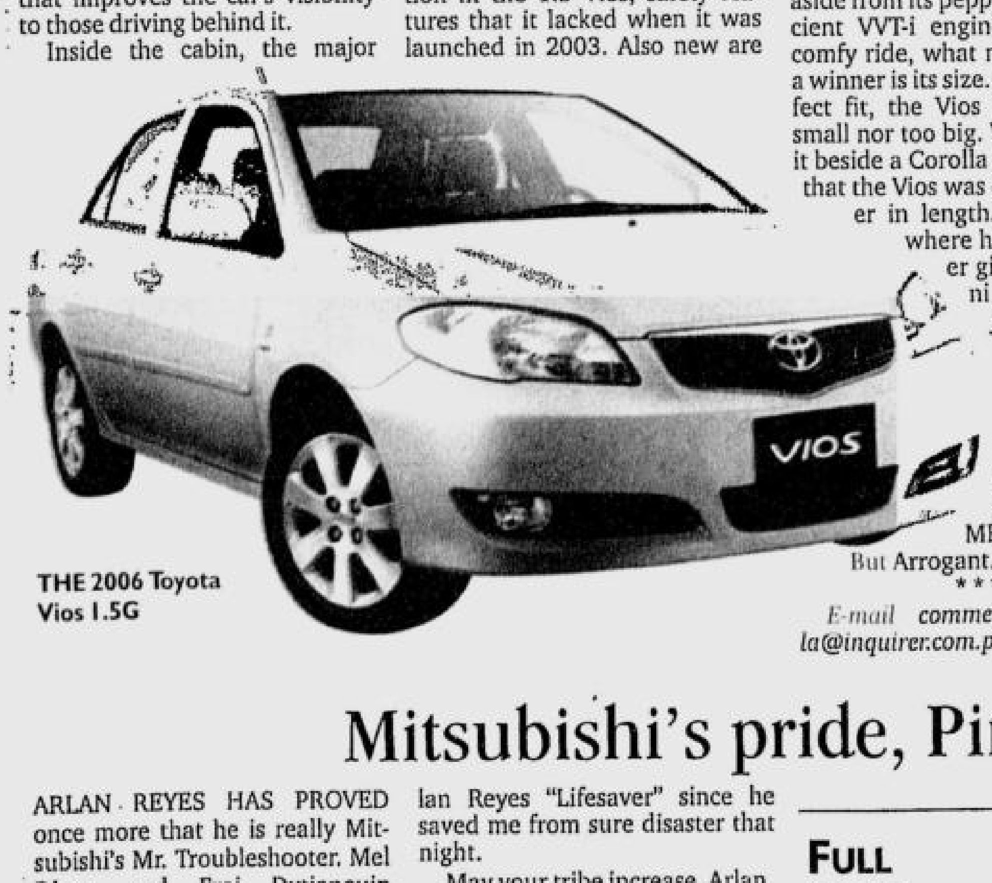
After driving a 2006 automatic transmission Vios 1.5G (SRP: P708,000) for two weeks over the holidays, I am convinced that aside from its peppy and fuel-efficient VVT-i engine, agility and comfy ride, what makes the Vios a winner is its size. Just like a perfect fit, the Vios is neither too small nor too big. When I parked it beside a Corolla Altis, I noticed that the Vios was only a tad lesser in length. In a country where hardly any driver gives way to mini cars, having just the right size of car is an advantage.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: MBA— Mediocre But Arrogant.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.



THE 2006 Toyota Vios 1.5G

Tires and wheels designed to make heads turn

By Charles E. Buban

"IF IT'S STOCK, IT DOESN'T rock," or so goes the prevailing attitude among some of today's auto enthusiasts who want more from the standard setup the manufacturer supplied on their vehicles.

"For these people, there are a number of options on how they will go about it. Probably one of the most straightforward way is to upgrade the tires as well as wheels," suggested Sammy Liuson, president of Wheel Gallery.

He added that tires and wheels are the first investment most auto enthusiasts make when upgrading or customizing their vehicles.

In fact, Liuson recently announced the arrival of several high-performance tire models from Nitto as well as premium luxury wheels from Twenty Inches Strong.

6 new models

"From the Nitto brand, we now have six new models: the NT 404, NT 20S, NT 555, Neo Gen, Terra Grapper and the Mud Grapper. Each model serves a different and unique purpose, so we suggest our buyers to drop by our Greenhills office (318 Santolan Rd.) in San Juan to discuss their requirements," he said.

The NT 404 are ultra high performance tire model from Nitto designed specifically for today's full-size pickups and SUVs.

It features an aggressive M+S (mud and snow) rated, double V tread pattern (comprised of a combination of slanted grooves and lateral slits) that provide efficient water drainage to ensure superior road handling on wet or slippery conditions.

The Nitto 420S, on the other hand, sports one of the most original and aggressive SUV tread patterns.

"The unique tread design is a perfect complement to your wheels as many SUV tires are directional, meaning they cannot be rotated from side to side and only front to back. The Nitto 420S nondirectional tread design gives you the freedom to rotate the tires front, back and side to side," Liuson explained.

Specially formulated

The NT 555 was developed for creating the ultimate street performance tire. "With a specially formulated compound and one of the biggest contact patches available, the NT 555 provides superior traction and reliable handling while delivers total vehicle control," Luison revealed.

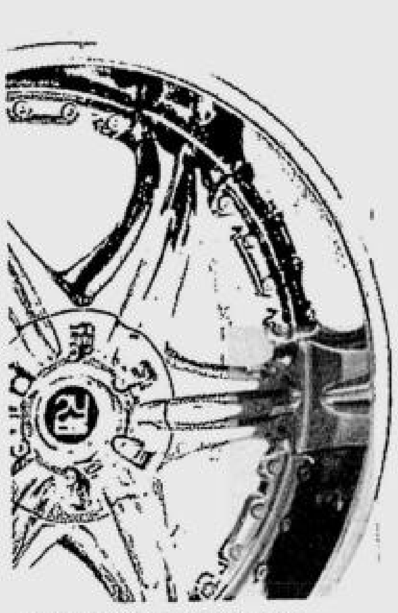
Another new Nitto tire model is the Neo Gen that features innovative three-dimensional, multi-wave sipes (small slits in a tire's tread that help push water away from the crown of the tire for improved wet traction) that are optimized to reduce irregular wear, as compared to conventional sipes.

All-terrain tires

The Terra Grapper (available in 20-inch size) is an all-terrain tire designed for light trucks and SUVs. This extreme performance tire encompass off-pavement requirements while maintaining superior on-pavement ride and handling.

The most extreme tire model in the Nitto lineup is Mud Grappler (available in 20-inch size), which is designed for extreme off-pavement needs as it features monstrous 15 mm sidelugs, which provide excellent sidewall puncture resistance along with outstanding rock crawling and mud traction.

THE NT 555: ultimate street performance tire



TWENTY-INCHES Strong wheels: a beauty to look at

Latest offering

One of the latest offerings from Wheel Gallery is the American-made Twenty Inches Strong (TIS) brand, considered the Armani or Rolex of wheels.

Made in the United States, the TIS is only offered in sizes no less than 20 inches, hence the name.

The TIS wheels are constructed using an exclusive hyperextended rivet-casting process, called Phat Lip Technology wherein the rivet wall is deep inside the wheel, creating a unique and aggressive deep lip profile for a wide wheel look without the wheel extending past the wheel well, even on passenger cars.

The TIS is also the only wheel to feature a unique numbered logo system which, according to Liuson, adds to its uniqueness.

Mitsubishi's pride, Ping DJ and Isuzu's SEE technology

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

ARLAN REYES HAS PROVED once more that he is really Mitsubishi's Mr. Troubleshooter. Mel Dizon and Froi Dytianquin should be truly proud of him.

My car got stalled at Rockwell's basement parking a few days back and who did I call?

Arlan Reyes.

Like the wind, Arlan Reyes came running in the dead of night. In a whiff, he had my car fixed.

The driver of my friend who saw everything wondered out aloud and said in Filipino, "Who is that, Sir?"

I told him Arlan is a respected executive of Mitsubishi.

"Oh, I thought he was simply a mechanic," he said.

From hereon, I will also call Arlan Reyes "Lifesaver" since he saved me from sure disaster that night.

May your tribe increase, Arlan.

* * *

If it's true that a comfort room at the final exit near Sta. Ines of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) isn't that comfortable as a letter-writer said a while back, I'm sure Ping de Jesus has already addressed it. I know Ping to be an action man; he will not waste one minute attending to it.

A friend of mine has also complained about trucks potentially damaging the world-class expressway due to overloading. He suggests that weigh-in areas for trucks entering the NLEX should be relocated outside the NLEX. At present, they are located inside the expressway. He has a point there. Prevention is always better than a cure, to paraphrase a saying.

I'm sure Ping will be to the rescue again. Already, I had doffed my hat off to Ping for exerting extra effort to pave that badly damaged road right after the NLEX, the one going to Mabalacat and Concepcion, Tarlac. What a relief, indeed!

* * *

Each time a car buff inquires about how good Isuzu is as a vehicle, I never hesitate to say that it's one of the best, if not the best, diesel-powered ride this side of the globe. So good is Isuzu that Rudolf Diesel must have Isuzu in mind when he invented the diesel engine in 1898. Through the years, Isuzu cannot be denied as the king of diesel engines hereabouts.

The good thing about Isuzu is, it has now virtually killed the irritating noise caused by diesel engines. For two decades now, Isuzu vehicles rival the best gasoline-powered engines, noise-wise. Also, a 150-horsepower diesel today approximates the performance of a 200-hp gasoline unit particularly in terms of acceleration. And that's not to include much-improved fuel efficiency and lower carbon dioxide emissions.

This year, Isuzu is pushing for its new corporate thrust: SEE technology (Safety, Economy, Environment). This is for "the future of mankind and the earth."

The Alterra is on the forefront of this technology, whose direct-injection diesel engine has exceeded the automotive standards of economy and environment.

The Alterra's 3.0-liter 4JJ-1 I-TEQ diesel, in 16-valve double overhead camshaft (DOHC) configuration, produces 146 ps of power, representing a 20 percent improvement from a noncommon-rail unit. Torque is also impressive at 30 kg-m. These robust figures are the results of the new common-rail system's precise fuel injection and enhanced combustion chamber design.

No wonder those who didn't have the patience last year to queue for the best-selling Toyota Fortuner have switched to the Alterra.

* * *

SEA GAMES CAR PLATES. According to Rodrigo C. Santos, the super efficient project director for the SEA Games commemorative plates, the SEA Games car plates you purchased last year are valid up to Sept. 7, 2006.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Make it a habit to overtake only the slow-moving vehicles, never those traveling at 100 kph.

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net.

Republic of the Philippines

BUREAU OF SOILS AND WATER MANAGEMENT

Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

January 9, 2006

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bureau of Soils and Water Management through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	: Contract for Security & Janitorial Services
Location	: SRDC Bldg., Quezon City; Tanay NSWRRDC; Bulacan NSWRRDC; Bukidnon HSWRRDC; Pacdal, Baguio City
Brief Description	: Security & Janitorial Services for the period of March 16, 2006 to December 2006
Approved Budget for the Contract	: Security Services: P1,300,000.00 Janitorial Services: P1,200,000.00
Contract Duration	: March 16, 2006 to December 31, 2006

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two-(2) years (CY 2004-2005) with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	January 11-27, 2006
2. Issuance of Bid Documents/ Eligibility Forms	January 11-27, 2006
3. Last day of submission of LOI and Eligibility Documents	January 27, 2006
4. Pre-bid Conference	February 2, 2006 BSWM Lecture Room 1, 10:00 AM
5. Opening of Bids	February 15, 2006 BSWM Lecture Room 1, 10:00 AM

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,300.00 for security services and P1,200.00 for janitorial services to the Bureau of Soils and Water Management Cashier.

The Bureau of Soils and Water Management assume no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The Bureau of Soils and Water Management reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality therein, or accept any bid/s or offer/s, which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) **EDNA D. SAMAR**
Chairperson, BAC

Approved for publication:

(Sgd.) **WILFREDO E. CABEZON**
Assistant Director

(PDI - Jan. 18, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines

ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED PRICE DETERMINATION METHODOLOGY (PDM) FOR THE PHILIPPINE ELECTRICITY SPOT MARKET (WESM)

ERC CASE NO. 2003-356

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE), THROUGH THE PHILIPPINE ELECTRICITY MARKET CORPORATION – MARKET OPERATOR

Applicant.

x-----------------------------------x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given of the filing on January 6, 2006 by the Philippine Electricity Market Corporation (PEMC) for its *"Manifestation and Compliance"* to the *"Order"* of the Commission dated 23 November 2005 relative to the instant application for the approval of the proposed Price Determination Methodology (PDM) for the Philippine Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM).

The Commission has set the said application for hearing on January 24, 2006 at nine o'clock in the morning (9:00 A.M.) at the ERC – Board Room, 16th Floor Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. All parties who have submitted their comments and/or opposition during the Public Consultation held for the instant application are already deemed as Parties of Record and need not file the same comments and/or opposition unless they wish to amplify the same or add thereon. Anyone who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings, may request that before the date of hearing, they be furnished with copies of the application by PEMC, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such interested party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and the Honorables **OLIVER B. BUTALID, JESUS N. ALCORDO, RAUF A. TAN** and **ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN**, Commissioners, Energy Regulatory Commission, January 9, 2006 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) **FRANCISCO JOSE S. VILLA, JR.**
Director III

(PDI–January 11 & 18, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of South Cotabato

Municipality of Lake Sebu

January 6, 2006

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Lake Sebu through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

1.	**Name of Contract**	**: Construction of Wet Market Building**
	Location	**: Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato**
	Brief Description	**: Const. of 18mx36m bldg. with concrete flooring**
	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	**: P3,200,000.00**
	Contract Duration	**: 120 Calendar day (C.D.)**
2.	**Name of Contract**	**: Construction of Public Terminal**
	Location	**: Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato**
	Brief Description	**: Const. of 18mx36m with concrete flooring**
	A.B.C.	**: P2,000,000.00**
	Contract Duration	**: 90 C.D.**
3.	**Name of Contract**	**: Construction of Public Water System**
	Location	**: Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato**
	Brief Description	**: Drilling and const. of concrete elevated water tank, pipe laying and installation of submersible pump**
	A.B.C.	**: P1,000,000.00**
	Contract Duration	**: 75 C.D.**
4.	**Name of Contract**	**: Construction of Pay Toilet**
	Location	**: Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato**
	Brief Description	**: Construction of Toilet with 4 comfort rooms and 4 bathrooms**
	A.B.C.	**: P450,000.00**
	Contract Duration	**: 45 C.D.**
5.	**Name of Contract**	**: Construction of Eco-Park**
	Location	**: Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato**
	Brief Description	**: T'boli house, pathwalk, animal cage, toilets, man-made falls**
	A.B.C.	**: P4,000,000.00**
	Contract Duration	**: 120 C.D.**
6.	**Name of Contract**	**: Fencing of Controlled Dumpsite**
	Location	**: Sitio Tebele, Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato**
	Brief Description	**: Fencing with gate**
	A.B.C.	**: P500,000.00**
	Contract Duration	**: 60 C.D.**
7.	**Name of Equipment**	**: Purchase of 1 unit Dumptruck**
	Brief Description	**: 6 wheelers, Reconditioned**
	A.B.C.	**: P515,000.00**
8.	**Name of Equipment**	**: Conversion of Hino 55633 Dumptruck to Primemover**
	Brief Description	**: Conversion of Dumptruck to Primemover, Supply of genuine spareparts for repair of Dumptruck, supply and install of surplus Coupler Sadler assembly, supply surplus lowbed trailer.**
	A.B.C.	**: P1,965,000.00**
9.	**Name of Equipment**	**: Purchase of 1 unit Hydraulic Excavator (Crawler Type)**
	Brief Description	**: Brandnew**
	A.B.C.	**: P7,515,000.00**

Prospective bidders possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment listed in the Eligibility forms available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Schedules of Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) activities are as follows:

1. Receipt from prospective bidders of letter of intent (LOI) including application for eligibility	February 1, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility forms	February 1, 2006
3. Receipt of eligibility requirements	February 7, 2006
4. Notice of results of eligibility check	February 15, 2006
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 22, 2006
6. Pre-bid conference	February 22, 2006
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	March 1, 2006 @ 10:00 A.M.

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders eligibility forms at Municipal Hall, upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable fee of P100.00 to the LGU Lake Sebu Municipal Treasurer. Prospective bidders shall submit the eligibility requirements at the said address. They may also obtain results of the eligibility check at the same address.

The BAC will issue bidding documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible upon payment of non-refundable amount of 1% of the items 1-6 to the LGU Lake Sebu Municipal Treasurer.

The LGU Lake Sebu assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses ocurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **ENGR. TEODORO E. EMBOLTORIO**
Municipal Engineer
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Jan. 18 & 25, 2006)

Sto. Tomas allays fears of massive layoffs

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT SECRETARY Patricia A. Sto. Tomas has dispelled rumors of a massive layoffs in the government's rationalizations program, saying the move intends only to further strengthen government services.

In a radio interview, Sto. Tomas clarified that the rationalization program is part of the government's efforts to improve its service delivery and efficiency by streamlining agencies through dissolution of redundant offices and posts and realignment of personnel.

She said that all government agencies have been directed to determine how they could strengthen public services without displacing employees. The DOLE, she added, would strengthen frontline services by transferring people from the Central Office in Manila to the regions.

"We will be adding more people in the field," she said, reiterating that no one in the DOLE will be displaced since those who will be affected by rationalization but do not want to leave government service will be transferred to essential positions especially in the DOLE regional and provincial offices.

Sto. Tomas also said that those who want to retire, on the other hand, may avail of the voluntary separation program which gives bigger benefits than those being provided under the usual retirement program.

"They can use the separation benefits to start a business and consequently earn higher returns than the salaries they get from their previous jobs in government," she said.

The DOLE chief advised employees in other government agencies who are anxious with the rationalization program to seek clarifications from their agency's human resource department or from the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Budget and Management.

She noted that under the rationalization program, all government workers have the choice to stay or retire from the service and that "no government worker can be removed from the service without just cause."

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Central Regional Office Luzon Office
Cabanatuan City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

FOR GRAINS HANDLING SERVICES OF NFA REGION III (RE-BIDDING)

The National Food Authority, NFA Central Luzon Regional Office, Cabanatuan City invites all interested Grains Handling Services Contractors to apply for eligibility and to rebid for handling the movement of grain stocks and by-products in the warehouses, ricemills and other installations of Region III and to load/unload to/from trucks said commodities with an Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for the year 2006 as follows:

PROVINCES	LOT NO	LOCATION OF WAREHOUSE	VOLUME TO BE HANDLED (IN BAGS)	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT
Bulacan	I	TLL Whses – Marilao	1,197,750	P 5,797,110.00
Nueva Ecija	II	Whse 1-13-Cab City	1,428,400	6,942,024.00
		Whse 1 & 2 – Gapan		
	III	Aliaga Whse – Aliaga	265,500	1,290,330,000
		GID-Bongabon		
		Guimba Whse 1-2		
Pampanga	IV	Sindalan 1 and 2	523,800	2,472,336.00
	V	Del Rosario Whse	190,000	896,800.00
		TOTAL	3,605,450	P 17,398,600.00

The prospective bidder may bid in any or all lots upon payment of a non-refundable application fee of P500.00, bidding fee of P2,500.00 and submission of a certified photocopy each of the following documents:

1) DTI business name registration, CDA Registration and/or SEC registration certificate, whichever may be appropriate;
2) Valid and current Mayor's Permit/Official Receipt

The issuance of bid documents, pre-bidding conference and bidding proper shall be conducted at NFA-CLRO, Conference Room, Cabanatuan City on the following schedule:

PARTICULARS	DATE
1. Issuance of Application and Bidding Documents	January 12 – February 02, 2006
2. Pre-Bidding Conference	February 03, 2006, (10:00 A.M.)
3. Deadline of submission of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals (Opening of Bids will follow immediately)	February 17, 2006 (10:00 A.M.)

Eligibility criteria includes, among others that the value of the prospective bidder's largest single contract, adjusted to current prices using the wholesale consumer price index completed and similar to the contract to be bid, must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.

The bidding shall be governed by RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. For further inquiries, please contact the RBAC Chairman or Secretariat at NFA-CLRO, Cabanatuan City with Telephone Nos. (044)-463-1167, (044)-463-1168 and (044)-463-1233.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THEREOF, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITIES OR DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS OR TO AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NFA OR TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **RUBEN J. RESIDE**
Asst. Regional Director
RBAC Chairman

(PDI–January 11 & 18, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines

NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES BOARD

GATEWAY PROPERTY HOLDINGS, INC.
7/F Corinthian Plaza 121
Paseo de Roxas, Legaspi Village, Makati City
Applicant,

Case No. 05-1044

x-----------------------------------x

NOTICE OF HEARING

Applicant, authorized operator of waterworks system within Gateway Business Park, Brgy. Javalera, Gen. Trias, Cavite, request for authority to increase its rates:

PROPOSED RATES

Commercial / Industrial	
Consumption, cu.m.	Peso / cu.m.
0 - 25 (min.)	250.00
26-975	30.00
976 - Above	34.00

Noloice is hereby given that this application will be heard by the Board on **February 2, 2006 at 9:30 in the morning at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA Quezon City** at which time Applicant shall present its evidence.

At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing. Applicant shall publish this notice once in one (1) daily newspaper of general circulation in Cavite and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of (i) the application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice to all affected parties appearing on page 3 hereof.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the Applicant.

Failure on the part of any affected party to file his opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of his right to be heard and the Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Failure by the Applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Chairman of the National Water Resources Board this 28th day of December 2005.

By Authority of the Board

(Sgd.) **RAMON B. ALIKPALA**
Executive Director

Affected Parties:

THE BARANGAY CHAIRMAN
Brgy. Javalera,
Gen. Trias, Cavite

THE SECRETARY
Sangguniang Bayan,
Gen. Trias, Cavite

THE LOCATOR'S - PRESIDENT
Gateway Business Park,
Brgy. Javalera,
Gen. Trias, Cavite

(PDI - Jan. 18, 2006)

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STARCM

SUPPORT TO AGRARIAN REFORM COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL MINDANAO
Project Management Office
3rd Floor ROMA Building, Quezon Boulevard, Kidapawan City 9400
Tel. #: (064) 278-4009 Fax: (064) 278-4252 Email: starcm@philcom.ph

DAR

NOTICE OF VACANT POSITIONS

STARCM is a special Project of the Government of the Philippines funded by the European Union and implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). The Project provides support for the development of agrarian reform communities in the provinces of Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. The Project is seeking to fill the following positions in Kidapawan City or Iligan City:

AGRARIAN REFORM COMMUNITY COORDINATOR (1) **Duty Station: Kidapawan City**	Must have a Bachelor's degree in any applied/social sciences. At least 3 years proven linkaging and liaison work with government agencies, local government units and non-government organizations in the implementation and monitoring/supervision of rural micro-projects and institutional cross-cutting concerns. Must be familiar with the rural socio-economic constraints in Central Mindanao.
PROJECT INSPECTOR (1) **Duty Station: Iligan City**	Must be a licensed Civil Engineer with at least 2 years vast experience in undertaking monitoring, evaluation and supervision of various rural infrastructure projects such as potable water supplies, communal irrigation projects, community facilities, and feeder roads/bridges. Working knowledge in the preparation of technical designs/estimates and reports a distinct advantage.
MATERIALS ENGINEER (2) **Duty Station: Kidapawan City**	Must be a licensed Civil Engineer and have passed the DPWH Accreditation Examination for Materials Engineer. Have at least 3 years proven experience in conducting laboratory and field testing relative to the implementation of sub-projects such as communal water supplies, communal irrigation projects community facilities and feeder roads/ bridges.
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR (1) **Duty Station: Iligan City**	Must have a Bachelor's degree in applied social sciences, preferably in Nursing, Social Work, Public Health and Administration, Rural Sociology, or Community Development. A related MS degree will be an advantage. He/she will have at least five (5) years experience with the provision of social services, community organising and/or rural development work in coordination with LGUs. Familiarity with provisions of the Local Government Code and the Health Sector Reform Agenda is required.
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST (1) **Duty Station: Kidapawan City**	Must have a Master's degree in business administration, economics, enterprise development or a closely related discipline. He/she will have at least five (5) years commercial experience of small businesses and be familiar with the preparation of financial projections and marketing plans. S/he must have a clear understanding of business principles and should have applied them to small and/or medium sized enterprises. Experience with successful cooperative business ventures will be a distinct advantage.

The Specialists must be physically fit and prepared to undertake fieldwork throughout Central Mindanao. S/he must be fluent in English and highly proficient with MS Office software. S/he should know how to drive a motorcycle and possess a professional driver's license.

Only shortlisted applicants will be notified. Deadline for the submission of applications is on **30 January 2006.**

(Sgd.) **GLYNN P. BAKER**
European Co-Director

(Sgd.) **OSCAR A. MAMA**
National Project Director

An application letter, including a resumé detailing duties, responsibilities and relevant experience, and copy of transcript of records should be submitted to:

The Project Co-Directors
STARCM Project Management Office
3/F ROMA Building, Quezon Boulevard, 9400 Kidapawan City

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5285

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO REBID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Eight (8) Units of Skid-Mounted Remanufactured Engine Under FGO 50207
Approved Budget: PHP 7,600,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Roderick R. Cabantog** starting **January 11, 2006**, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **January 19, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

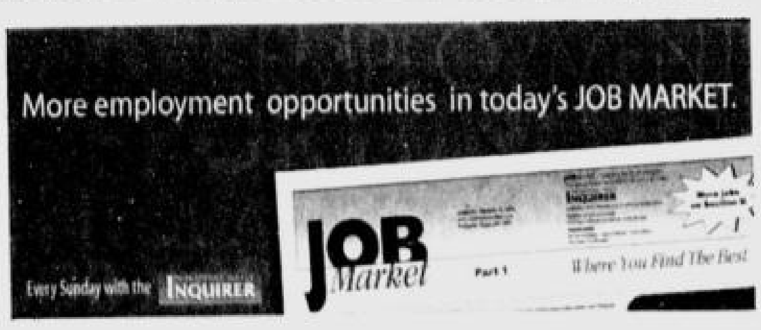
Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Procurement and Materials Management Division, at the above address and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Procurement Department Office Wall Clock time) on **February 2, 2006**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee I

(PDI–Jan. 11 & 18, 2006)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EPCIB board not yet decided on BDO offer

Management to review merits of merger

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE EQUITABLE PCI BOARD YESTERDAY SET aside discussions on the controversial merger proposal from Banco de Oro Universal Bank pending the results of the review on the offers merits by the bank's management team.

In an interview yesterday, EPCIBank chair Ferdinand Martin Romualdez said the offer was not even on the agenda as management was tasked to study the offer and, if necessary, seek help from a financial adviser.

He said the management, led by bank president Rene Buenaventura, would likely submit its recommendation by Friday this week.

"I would imagine that they would submit a criteria on the hiring of a financial adviser," Romualdez said, noting however that he himself was not keen on hiring an adviser.

Romualdez and GSIS president Winston Garcia likewise said earlier that they found the merger offer "unattractive."

"If we are interested in a merger, why only BDO? Why not open the doors to other banks," Romualdez said, noting that shareholders, including the GSIS and SSS, would get a better value for their shares in EPCIBank by bidding out their stakes as one.

BDO has given shareholders until Jan. 31 to assess its offer to merge with EPCIBank through a swap of up to 1.6 of its shares for every EPCIB share.

Social Security System president Corazon dela Paz said, meanwhile, that the pension fund was keeping an open mind on the proposal.

Dela Paz also said earlier that the pension fund would conduct its own assessment of the offer and would not necessarily have to vote in tandem with the GSIS.

SSS owns 29 percent of EPCIBank, while the GSIS and Romualdez groups own 12 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

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Altis 1.8 E A/T	878,000	100,000	67,006	46,142	36,776	26,243	21,175	18,282
Altis 1.6 E A/T	800,000	100,000	59,984	41,307	32,928	23,497	18,960	16,366
Altis 1.6 E M/T	765,000	100,000	56,834	39,137	31,201	22,265	17,966	15,506
Altis 1.6 J M/T	708,000	100,000	51,702	35,604	28,389	20,258	16,347	14,106
Innova 2.5 G A/T	1,045,000	100,000	82,485	56,802	45,253	32,293	26,057	22,505
Innova 2.5 G M/T	980,000	100,000	76,634	52,772	42,047	30,005	24,211	20,909
Innova 2.0 G A/T	985,000	100,000	77,084	53,082	42,294	30,181	24,353	21,031
Innova 2.0 G M/T	930,000	100,000	72,133	49,673	39,580	28,244	22,790	19,681
Innova 2.5 E M/T	885,000	100,000	68,082	46,883	37,360	26,660	21,512	18,575
Innova 2.5 J M/T	798,000	100,000	60,250	41,490	33,069	23,598	19,041	16,439
Innova 2.0 J M/T	748,000	100,000	55,749	38,390	30,602	21,837	17,621	15,210

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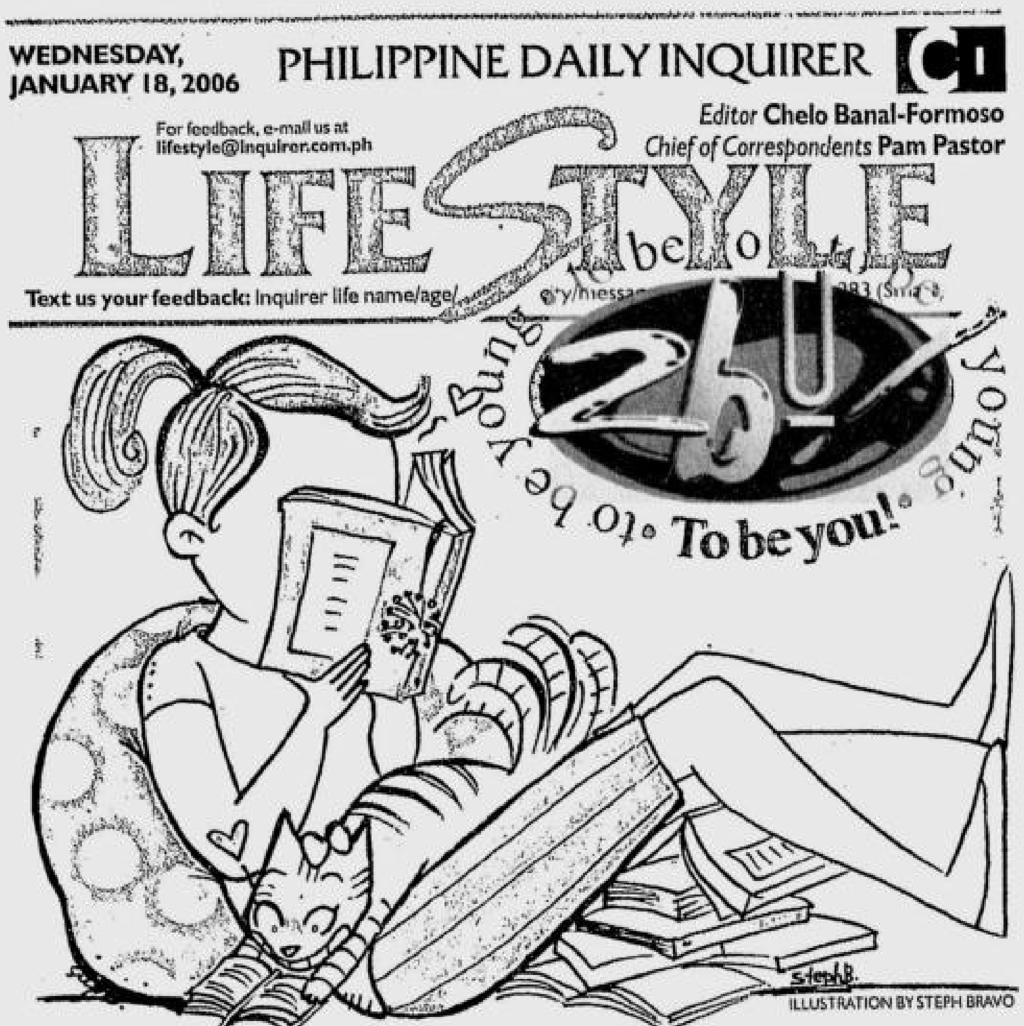

A different kind of Chinovela

By Jamie Alarcon

TEN YEARS AFTER "Bridget Jones's Diary" first came off the presses, there's still no stopping chick lit.

In 2005, market research firm Simba Information Inc. estimated that these light, breezy stories written by, for and about spunky female yuppies raked in about $137 million in the United States alone.

Local bookstores have devoted entire shelves and displays to the ubiquitous and perennially pastel paperbacks. Filipino authors have tried their hands at the genre, too. Since 2003, Summit Books has published no less than 10 chick lit titles, which include "Drama Queen" and "No Boyfriend Since Birth."

Over on the mainland, however, there are some women on the Chinese chick lit forefront who owe more to William Burroughs, Douglas Coupland and Jack Kerouac than to Bette Bao Lord and Amy Tan.

> Some women on the Chinese chick lit forefront owe more to William Burroughs, Douglas Coupland and Jack Kerouac than to Bette Bao Lord and Amy Tan

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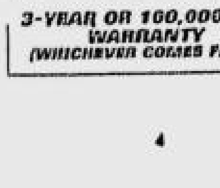

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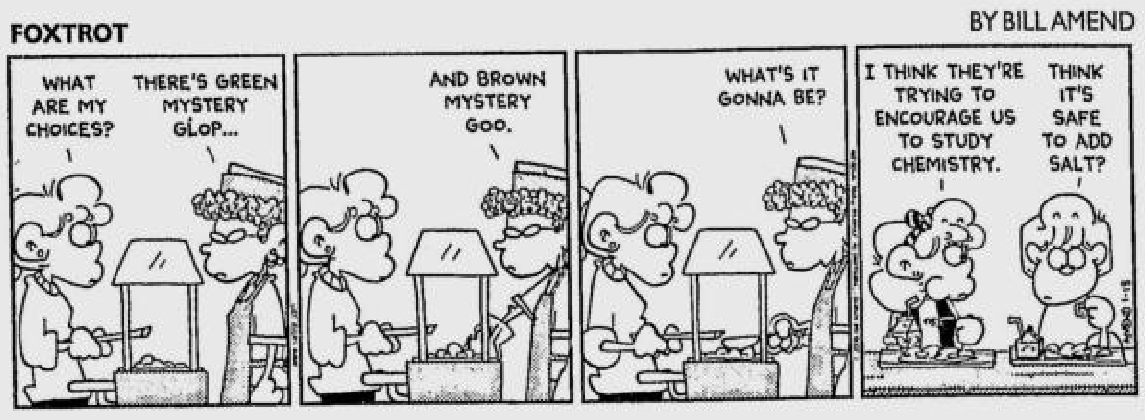
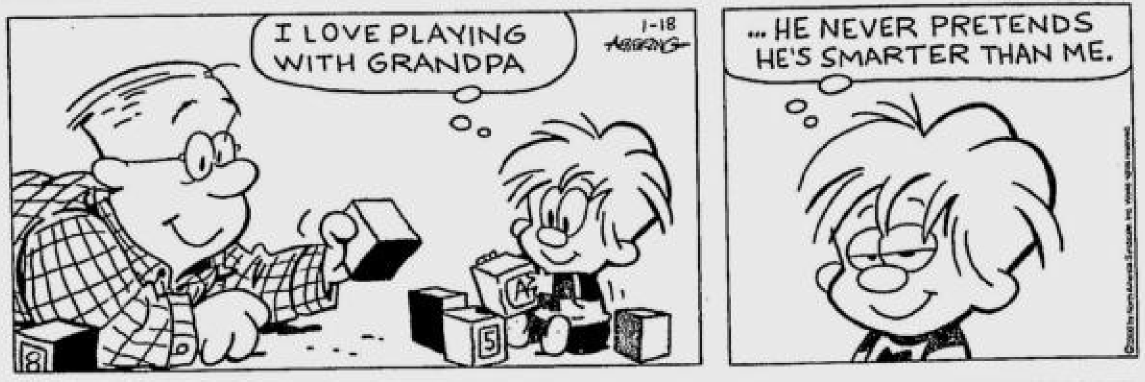
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT ARE MY CHOICES?
THERE'S GREEN MYSTERY GLOP...
AND BROWN MYSTERY GOO.
WHAT'S IT GONNA BE?
I THINK THEY'RE TRYING TO ENCOURAGE US TO STUDY CHEMISTRY.
THINK IT'S SAFE TO ADD SALT?

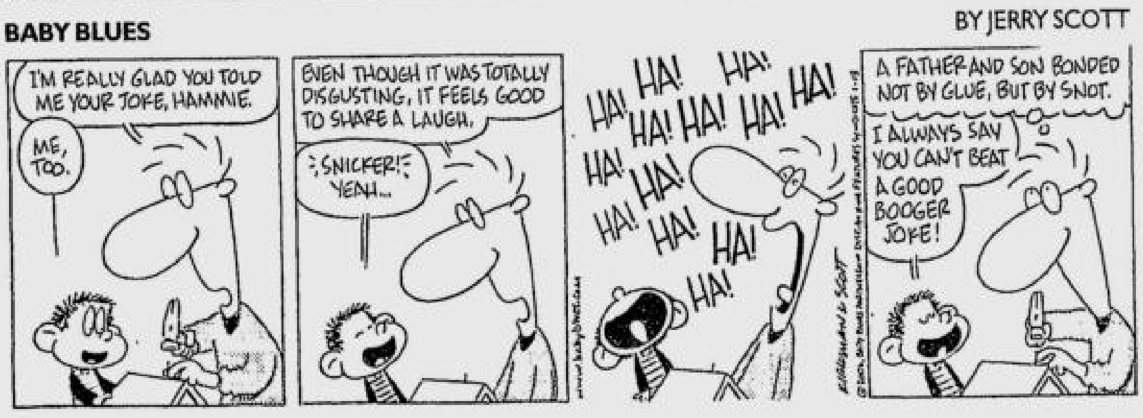
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I LOVE PLAYING WITH GRANDPA
1-18
... HE NEVER PRETENDS HE'S SMARTER THAN ME.

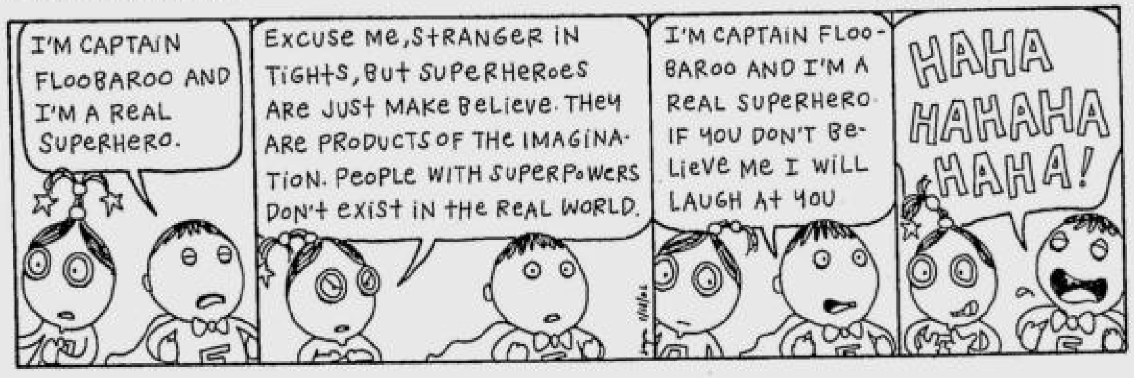
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I'M REALLY GLAD YOU TOLD ME YOUR JOKE, HAMMIE.
ME, TOO.
EVEN THOUGH IT WAS TOTALLY DISGUSTING, IT FEELS GOOD TO SHARE A LAUGH.
SNICKER! YEAH...
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!
A FATHER AND SON BONDED NOT BY GLUE, BUT BY SNOT.
I ALWAYS SAY YOU CAN'T BEAT A GOOD BOOGER JOKE!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'M CAPTAIN FLOOBAROO AND I'M A REAL SUPERHERO.
Excuse Me, STRANGER IN TIGHTS, But SUPERHEROES ARE JUST MAKE BELIEVE. THEY ARE PRODUCTS OF THE IMAGINATION. PEOPLE WITH SUPERPOWERS DON'T EXIST IN THE REAL WORLD.
I'M CAPTAIN FLOOBAROO AND I'M A REAL SUPERHERO. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME I WILL LAUGH AT YOU
HAHA HAHAHA HAHA!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're fun-loving and imaginative. Not only do you want to have a good time, you want others to enjoy themselves, too! You make a good parent. You always remember the child within you. You like to be stimulated; you don't like routine. In the year ahead, you'll let go of things, places and people to begin a new cycle around October.

Birthdate of: Mark Messier, hockey player; Cary Grant, actor; Kevin Costner, actor/director.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a poor day for making financial decisions. Because you're confused about something, you hesitate. This means you cannot fully stand up for yourself. Best not to act.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a tough day. You feel like you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. You can't win! Discussions with parents and bosses seem to paralyze you. Do nothing. Just wait.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're not sure what to do today because, within you, you feel self-doubt about something. This makes you hesitate. You don't know which way to jump. Therefore, do nothing.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): If you think something fishy is going on between you and a friend or you and a member of a group—you're right. It is! Always trust your gut instincts.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): It's hard to know what authority figures want from you today. (These people could be parents, bosses or teachers.) Just play along.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): There's confusion about travel plans or something related to publishing and the media. Perhaps even educational matters are fuzzy. Don't try to force any issues today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Financial matters and anything having to do with shared property could create a problem today. Something you thought was clear is now obviously very confused! Bide your time.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): By nature, you are decisive. You tend to see things in a black-and-white way. But today, many people are not sure what to do about a lot of things. Therefore, just wait.

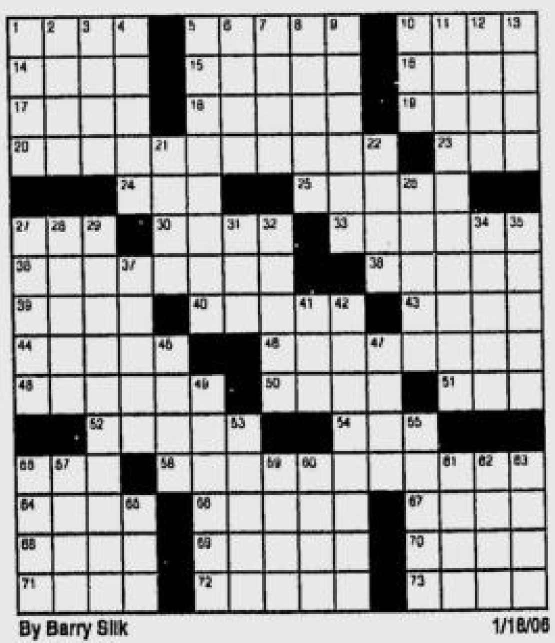
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Someone at work might deceive you today. This could be intentional or accidental; either way, you're working with faulty information! Be on guard for this.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Romance, love affairs, vacation plans and dealings with children are areas that you feel doubtful about today. If you're not sure what to do, wait.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): There has been confusion and chaos at home due to moves, activity, visiting guests or family conflict. Today you feel paralyzed about what to do. If you don't know what to do, do nothing.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Something having to do with money, finances or your possessions is not clear today. Avoid important decisions regarding these areas.

DAILY CROSSWORD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14 15 16
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36 37 38
39 40 41 42 43
44 45 46 47
48 49 50 51
52 53 54 55
56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63
64 65 66 67
68 69 70
71 72 73

By Barry Silk
McLean, VA

1/18/06

ACROSS
1 Invitation's letters
5 Typo
10 Zenith
14 Utah team
15 Purplish shade
16 Mature
17 Screenwriter Ephron
18 Cantilevered window
19 Secluded valley
20 Ping-Pong
23 Poetic pasture
24 CCCXXXVII tripled
25 Stupid one
27 Harvest goddess
30 King toppers
33 Shipping lane
36 Leviathan
38 Italian bowling
39 False god
40 Below, in poems
43 Pro __
44 Used the VCR
46 Pledges
48 Like Czechs and Poles
50 Emerald Isle
51 Summer hrs. in D.C.
52 Virginia dances
54 Religious figs.
56 Menagerie
58 Risky baseball tactic
64 Aussie birds
66 Amiable satire
67 Sonny & Cher's old record label
68 Temporary shelter
69 Actor Flynn
70 It can follow the start of 20A, 58A, 11D and 29D
71 Artist Warhol
72 Actor DeVito
73 Needle case

DOWN
1 Pipsqueak
2 Greek portico
3 Action word
4 Sacred song
5 :-| or :-D, e.g.
6 Like a 1943 copper penny
7 Spoil
8 Roasting boxes
9 Museum collection
10 Bol. neighbor
11 White sale purchase
12 Fencing item
13 Lawless warrior?
21 Test
22 "The Purple People Eater" singer Wooley
26 Native New Zealander
27 Brief death notices
28 Piano piece?
29 Hit by the Miracles
31 Cezanne's summer
32 Contour
34 Was decisive
35 Beer stimulant
37 Ecole attendee
41 Dent or corn starter?
42 Equine pest?
45 Expired
47 Shea players
49 Shut
53 Toyota model
55 Declare
56 Greek letter
57 Warning sign
59 Brought to life
60 Moon-madness sufferer
61 Coup d'__
62 Citizens' rights org.
63 God of discord
65 Farm enclosure

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

A	F	A	R		N	I	T	A		A	W	A	R	E
L	A	D	E		U	S	E	R		T	O	G	U	P
A	R	E	A		C	L	E	O		A	R	E	N	A
M	A	L	L	F	L	A	N	D	E	R	S			
O	D	A	M	A	E				V	I	T	A	L	S
				T	I	P	T	O	E			R	O	T
C	A	R	P	I		L	O	R	N	A	D	U	N	E
A	B	E	A	M		A	D	A		S	O	B	E	R
P	I	G	M	A	L	I	O	N		L	E	A	R	N
E	D	A			I	N	S	I	D	E				
R	E	L	I	V	E				R	E	S	C	U	E
			M	A	R	R	Y	P	O	P	P	I	N	S
B	L	A	B	S		A	E	R	O		E	L	I	S
M	E	L	E	E		R	A	I	L		C	I	T	E
W	E	L	D	S		E	R	G	S		S	A	Y	S

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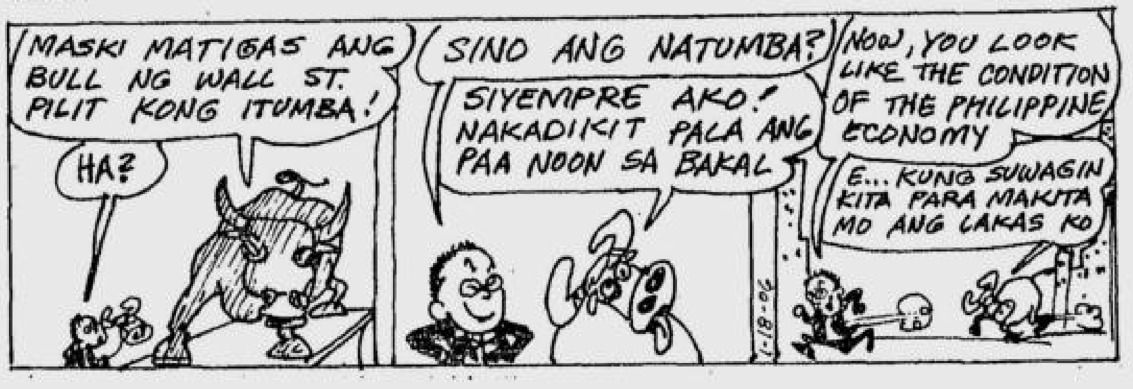
1/18/06

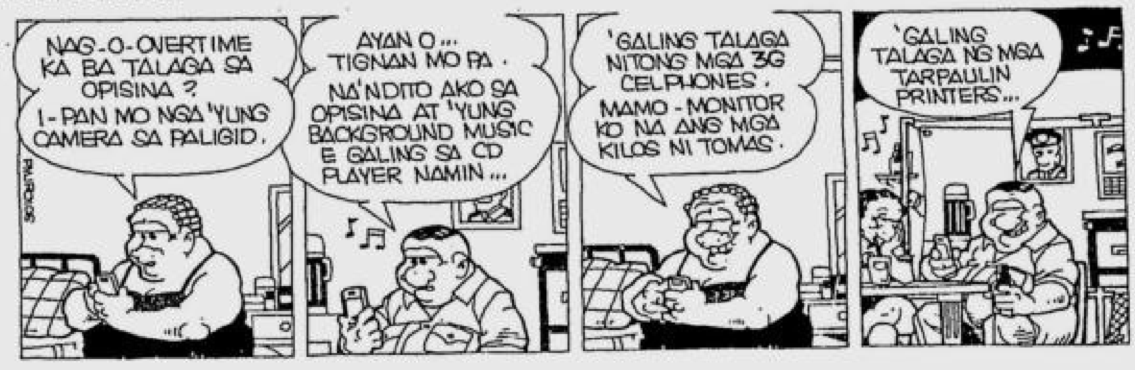
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MASKI MATIGAS ANG BULL NG WALL ST. PILIT KONG ITUMBA!
HA?
SINO ANG NATUMBA?
SIYEMPRE AKO! NAKADIKIT PALA ANG PAA NOON SA BAKAL
1-18-06
NOW, YOU LOOK LIKE THE CONDITION OF THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY
E... KUNG SUWAGIN KITA PARA MAKITA MO ANG LAKAS KO

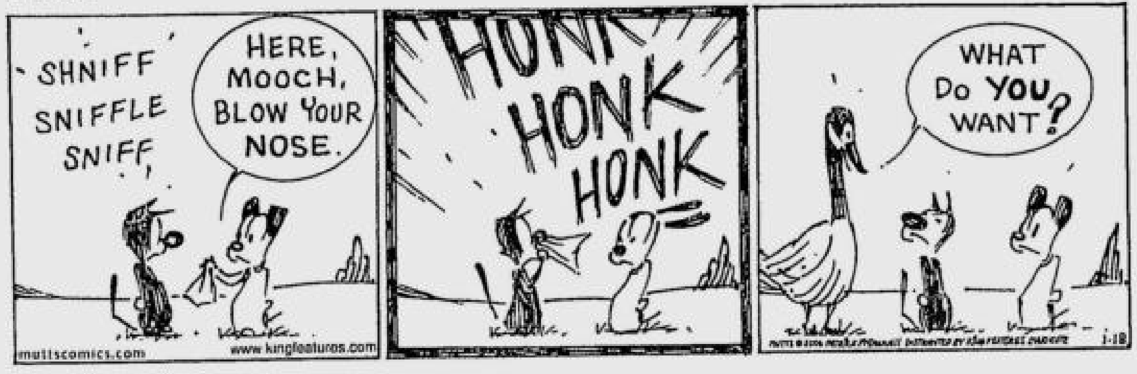
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAG-O-OVERTIME KA BA TALAGA SA OPISINA ? I-PAN MO NGA 'YUNG CAMERA SA PALIGID.
AYAN O... TIGNAN MO PA. NA'NDITO AKO SA OPISINA AT 'YUNG BACKGROUND MUSIC E GALING SA CD PLAYER NAMIN...
'GALING TALAGA NITONG MGA 3G CELPHONES. MAMO-MONITOR KO NA ANG MGA KILOS NI TOMAS.
'GALING TALAGA NG MGA TARPAULIN PRINTERS...

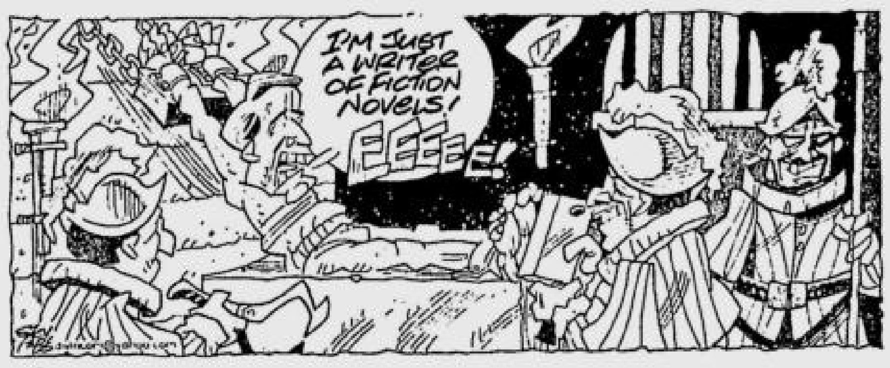
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SHNIFF SNIFFLE SNIFF,
HERE, MOOCH, BLOW YOUR NOSE.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
HONK HONK HONK
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
1-18

DIVINE COMEDY

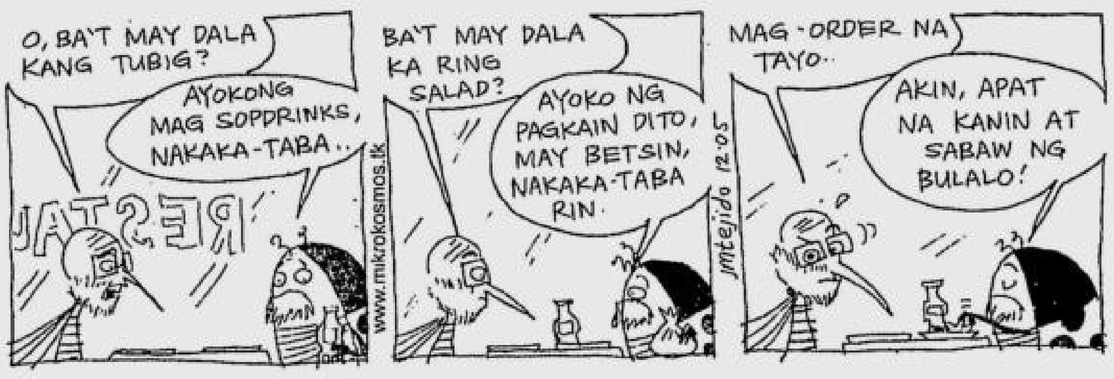
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I'M JUST A WRITER OF FICTION NOVELS!
EEEEE!

NANG SYA AY MULING NAG-RESEARCH SA VATICAN ARCHIVES PARA SA KANYANG SUSUNOD NA LIBRO, HINULI SI DAN BROWN AT TINORTURE NG MGA SWISS GUARDS

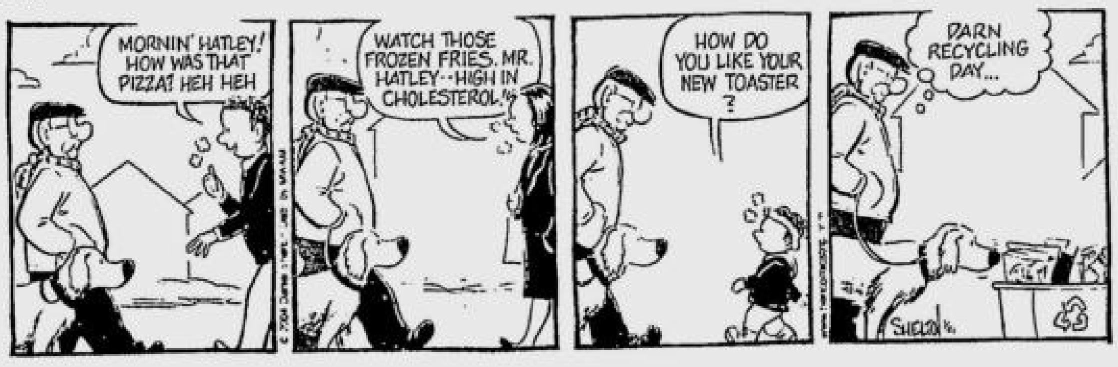
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


O, BA'T MAY DALA KANG TUBIG?
AYOKONG MAG SOPDRINKS, NAKAKA-TABA..
RESTAU
BA'T MAY DALA KA RING SALAD?
AYOKO NG PAGKAIN DITO, MAY BETSIN, NAKAKA-TABA RIN.
www.mikrokosmos.tk
jmtejido 12.05
MAG-ORDER NA TAYO..
AKIN, APAT NA KANIN AT SABAW NG BULALO!

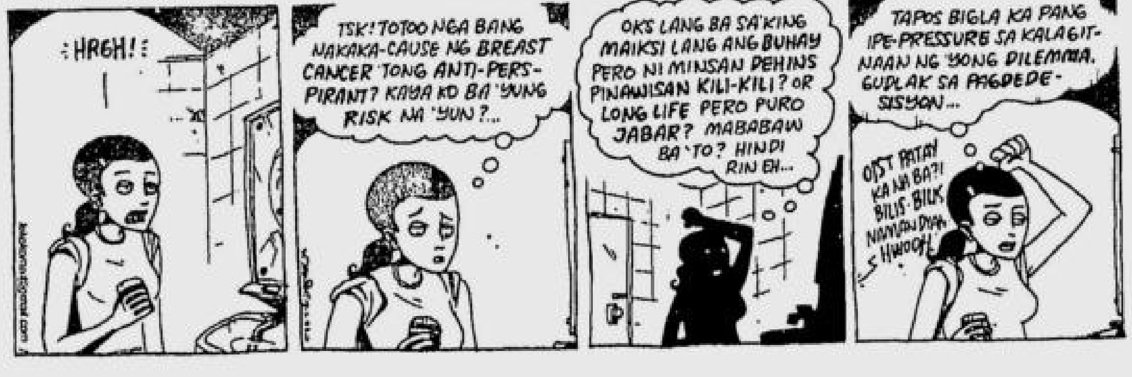
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


MORNIN' HATLEY! HOW WAS THAT PIZZA? HEH HEH
WATCH THOSE FROZEN FRIES, MR. HATLEY--HIGH IN CHOLESTEROL!
HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR NEW TOASTER ?
DARN RECYCLING DAY...

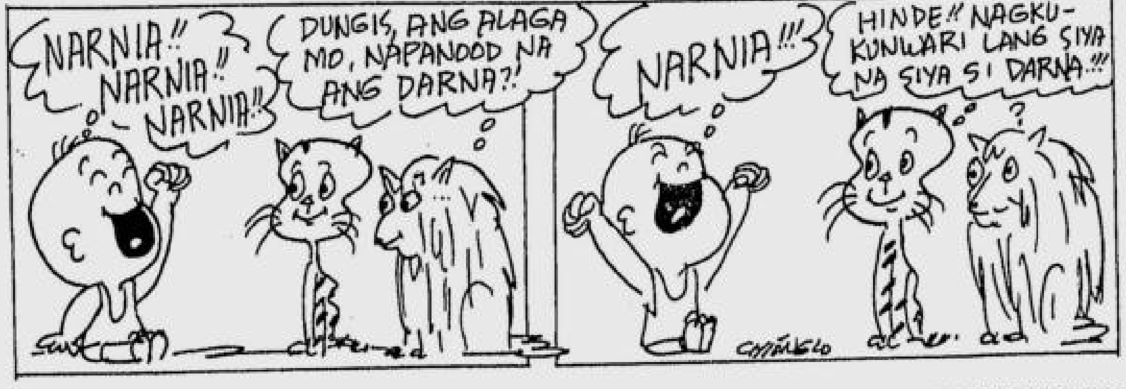
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HRGH!
TSK! TOTOO NGA BANG NAKAKA-CAUSE NG BREAST CANCER 'TONG ANTI-PERSPIRANT? KAYA KO BA 'YUNG RISK NA 'YUN?...
OKS LANG BA SA'KING MAIKSI LANG ANG BUHAY PERO NI MINSAN DEHINS PINAWISAN KILI-KILI? OR LONG LIFE PERO PURO JABAR? MABABAW BA 'TO? HINDI RIN EH...
TAPOS BIGLA KA PANG IPE-PRESSURE SA KALAGIT-NAAN NG 'YONG DILEMMA. GUDLAK SA PAGDEDE-SISYON...
OIST PATAY KA NA BA?! BILIS BILIS NAMAN DYAN HWOOH!

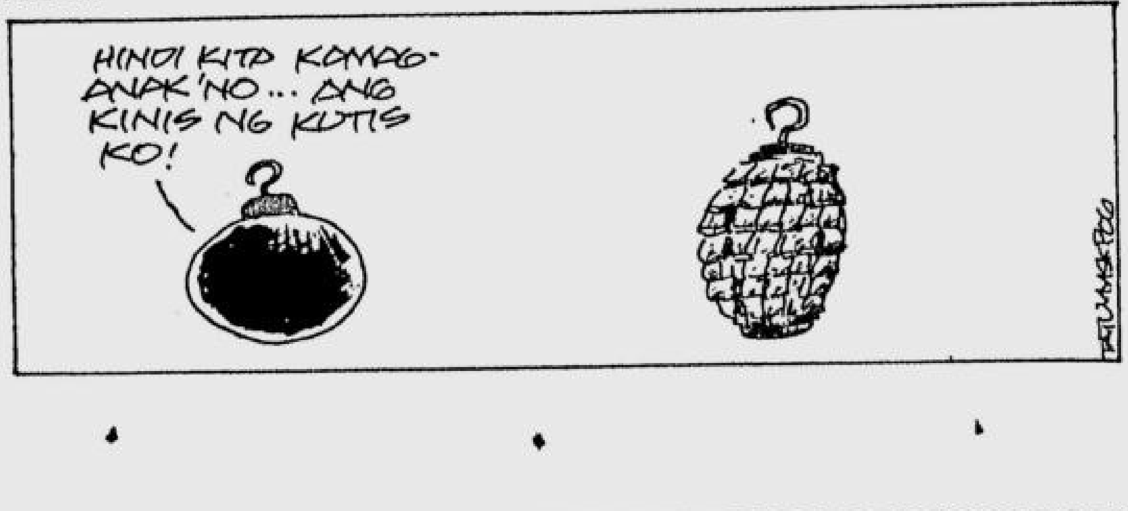
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NARNIA!! NARNIA!! NARNIA!!
DUNGIS, ANG ALAGA MO, NAPANOOD NA ANG DARNA?!
NARNIA!!!
HINDE!! NAGKU-KUNWARI LANG SIYA NA SIYA SI DARNA!!!
?
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HINDI KITA KAMAG-ANAK'NO... ANG KINIS NG KUTIS KO!

A different kind of Chinovela

From page C1

Anchee Min's "Wild Ginger" are haunted by memories of the Cultural Revolution, history and ideology take a back seat to sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll in many popular releases.

Joy luck clubbing

"The Cultural Revolution is out of my dictionary," Mian Mian, the thirty-something ex-drug addict who now throws parties for a living, told the San Francisco Gate last year. And it shows. Her first novel, "Candy," set in Southern China's Special Economic Zone at a time when the People's Republic was reacquainting itself with free trade, says nothing of socialism. Chinese authorities banned "Candy" anyway.

Its protagonist, Hong, is born into a family of intellectuals, but grows disillusioned with school after a friend cracks under the pressure of getting into a top university. Hong is eventually swallowed by a slacker lifestyle and turns to drugs to fill her unemployed days.

There's an apathy and indifference reminiscent of films like Zhang Yang's "Quitting" and Hou Hsiao-Hsien's "Millennium Mambo," but neither Hong nor her prostitute/druggie/frustrated musician friends have any real beef with the government.

Mian now spends her time organizing raves on the Great Wall of China (in the rain, no less) and visiting her daughter in Beijing. "I have so many other things to do with my life now," she said in the San Francisco Gate. "Drugs are really boring."

Piece of lit

"Candy" was banned in April 2000, the same month the government cracked down on another piece of chick lit, this time by Mian's "shock sister," Wei Hui.

While Mian took up writing as a form of therapy after rehab, Wei majored in literature at Fudan University and had an anthology of short stories ("Shriek of the Butterfly") under her belt prior to her first novel, "Shanghai Baby."

As with Mian's work, it's difficult to distinguish fact from fiction in "Shanghai Baby," which reads like a poignant but thinly veiled memoir. The story revolves around Coco, also a Fudan grad, who quits her waitress job to write the great Chinese novel. Coco makes her ambition clear from the very first page: "Every morning when I open my eyes I wonder what I can do to make myself famous."

Wei Hui shows off her powers of description in the novel-within-a-novel. "This is the city at rush hour: All sorts of vehicles and pedestrians, all their invisible desires and countless secrets, merge with the flow like rapids plunging through a deep gorge. The sun shines down on the street, hemmed in on both sides by skyscrapers—the mad creations of humans—towering between sky and earth, the petty details of daily life are like dust suspended in the air. They are a monotonous theme of our materialistic age."

The East is pink

According to its (blindingly pink) back cover, "Beijing Doll" was banned "for its candid exploration of a young girl's sexual awakening." The ban came a few months after its publication in 2002, when author Chun Sue was only 19.

The book is unabashedly autobiographical; reading it is like sneaking a peek at the diary your best friend kept when she was 15. Chun Sue starts off by listing down the things she thinks the readers ought to know about her: her name, her school, her friends and her favorite mall ("Long Live Parkson!").

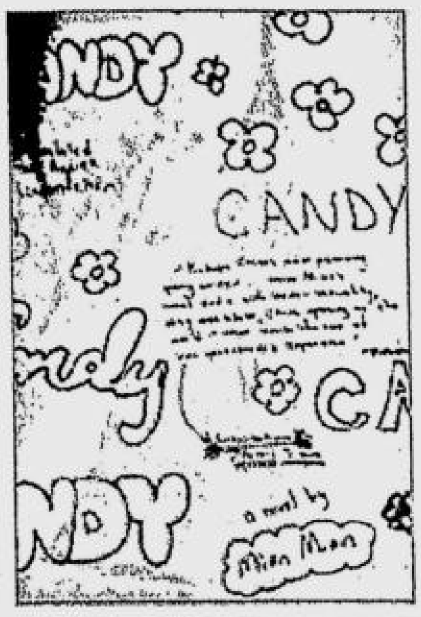
Throughout the book, she uses code names and initials to identify her various boyfriends and crushes—B5, G, T, Mint. (How does she meet said boyfriends? Personal ads in the paper, phone numbers lifted off demo tapes, you get the drift.)

Abandon all expectations of a plot. Chun Sue just coasts from one boy to another, drops out of school twice and comes to the conclusion that life is absurd. While there are the occasional flashes of insight, this "voice of the new generation" spends most of her time (and ours) whining.

Dog-eared reads

START off the Year of the Fire Dog with three of the wildest Oriental reads for the global fictionista.

shanghai baby



Beijing Doll

	"Shanghai Baby"	Candy	Beijing Doll
Author	Wei Hui, 32, "China's first banned pornographic female novelist"	Mian Mian, 34, "poster child for spiritual pollution"	Chun Sue, who wrote the novel when she was 17 and had it published at 19
Translator	Bruce Humes	Andrea Lingenfelter	Howard Goldblatt
Heroine	An aspiring writer torn between an impotent drug addict and a married German businessman	A sometime bar singer who can't orgasm and keeps winding up in rehab	A 15-year-old Courtney Love-wannabe who drags her mom along when she interviews bands
On love	"It was he who taught me that a kiss has a soul and colors all its own."	"Love is the fantasy you have smoking your third cigarette."	"A joining of the hearts? What a joke. I could have died laughing."
On life	"There was nothing to do but grab myself by the hair and yank myself off the planet."	"One morning as the sun was coming up, I told myself that I had to swallow up all of the fear and garbage around me, and once it was inside me I had to transform it all into candy."	"There was no discernible difference between the second just passed and the second yet to come."
On sex	"It's sweet with a slightly musky flavor, like aniseed and cinnamon duck soup."	"A climax is the climax you've never had."	"Sounds great."

Free gas!

PETRON KNOWS THAT IN these hard times, even filling up your gas tank is a burden. Enter Petron Xtra Unleaded, the gas that promises to give you value for your money. Racers JP Tuason, Michele Bumgarner, Tyson Sy and the multi-talented Epi Quizon swear by Petron Xtra Unleaded.

Petron wants you to try Xtra Unleaded Gas, which is why it's giving away a gift certificate to a lucky reader. Just answer this question—where will you go and who would you go with if you had a full tank of gas?

E-mail your answers to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph along with your name, age, school/office and contact info.

JP TUASON
"I travel to Batangas regularly and I get 14 km/liter. That would be about 840km on a full tank, even when I drive in real traffic, with aircon, headlights unlike in mileage runs." This car racer says he gets twice the value from his gas with Petron's Xtra Unleaded.

EPI QUIZON
"If you think economically and use your gas wisely, you can clear the whole of Luzon, especially if you're using the right gas such as Petron Xtra Unleaded, which has already been experimented and tested to give extra miles on the road. No bluffing."

MICHELE BUMGARNER
Top female karter and traffic headturner Michele would drive from Manila to Tali Beach with a full tank—about a 200-km drive. "I look forward to going there for some peace and quiet time," says this racing queen. PHOTO FROM WWW.MICHELEBUMGARNERRACING.COM.

TYSON SY
An 18-year-old international race driver for Formula 3, Tyson says that "If Petron's record is 1,114 km on a full tank, I can do the same or even better. I could probably beat the record!"

They got lucky!

CHECK IT OUT! CONGRATULATIONS to Bryan C. Pineda, Joy Ann Saldaña, Clinton Ching, Erika Rose S. Caroman and Gabby Dizon! You get to bring home a copy of Kitchie Nadal, Barbie Almalbis, Nina, Cueshe, Orange and Lemons, Eraserheads tribute, Bamboo and Hale's albums.

Just bring an identification card when you pick them up from the receptionist at the INQUIRER office, Chino Roces Avenue cor. Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City. Representatives should bring an I.D. and a certification letter. Prizes not claimed within 60 days will be forfeited.

Many thanks to the wonderful people at Warner Music Philippines, Sony-BMG, Universal Records Inc., and EMI Philippines.

Contests, contests and more contests!

We at 2bU! just love giving stuff away.
Here are more contests you can join and more prizes you can win

Do you have a Jollibarkada?

Tell us why you think your *barkada* is a Jollibarkada in the most creative way you can, and e-mail your entry at contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph. Don't forget to include your name, age, school/office and contact info. The best three entries will be chosen and the winners will receive a free *barkada* party package: P2,000 worth of Jollibee gift certificates.

Win Lettermen tickets for your parents or grandparents!

Oh yes, the Lettermen are coming to Manila and 2bU! is giving away tickets for their show at the Araneta Coliseum (Jan. 27 or 28) that you can win for your parents or your grandparents—the choice is up to you. Ten lucky readers in Manila will receive two prime seats each, while one lucky reader will get two patron seats for his or her loved ones.

Our readers from Cebu can join in on the fun, too. We're giving away four prime seats to the Lettermen's Jan. 30 performance in the Queen City of the South. Readers from Davao can also win two prime seats for their Jan. 31 show in the city.

Just tell us which Letterman song most reminds you of your parents or grandparents and why. E-mail your entries along with your name, age, school/office and contact info at contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph on or before 12 noon of Jan. 27.

Hong Kong Calling

Just like we said, exercise your creativity and you just might win a trip to Hong Kong for two, thanks to 2bU! and Astring O Sol.

All you have to do is create a pouch you would use for carrying your Astring O Sol minis (check them out at the supermarket nearest you). Beads, glitter, denim, satin—the choice of material and design is totally up to you.

Send your finished pouches to Unit 2714 City and Land Mega Plaza ADB Ave. cor. Garnet Rd. Ortigas Ave. Pasig City. Include your name, age, school/office and contact info. Three consolation prizes of P3,000 will also be given away. Deadline for this promo has been extended to Jan. 21.

Bottle battle

Many readers have already started sending in their spruced-up Lady's Choice jars in the hopes of winning our contest. Because we know more of you want to join, we are extending the deadline for another week.

Bring out your empty Lady's Choice jars, dress them up (be as imaginative as you can), transform them into beautiful décor items and send your entries to CEMG Suite B Vernida Bldg. Amorsolo St. Makati City. Don't forget to include your name, age, school/office and contact info.

FUTURA CLASSIC
The Value-Homes Division of Filinvest Land, Inc.

MOLAVE
90.10 sqm
usable floor area
• 2 BR
• 1 T & B
• Kitchen and living area
• Roof deck

CYPRESS
157.50 sqm
usable floor area
• 3 BR
• 2 T & B
• Kitchen and living area
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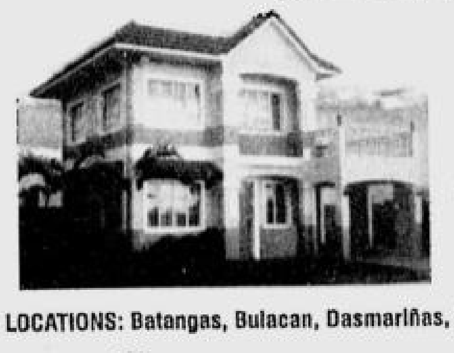


HP-PSC 1510

Good enough printer for the home office

By Gabriel H. Mercado
2bU! Contributor

NOT EVERYTHING HEWLETT Packard may have done has resulted in success. Compaq computers, for example, didn't seem to have created much of an impact for the brand. If anything, HP's company retooling after that mishap indicated a refocusing of efforts away from business outside of their normal scope and back into their traditional strengths.

And as far as making printers go, HP remains a leader. We've come to know HP via those products anyway.

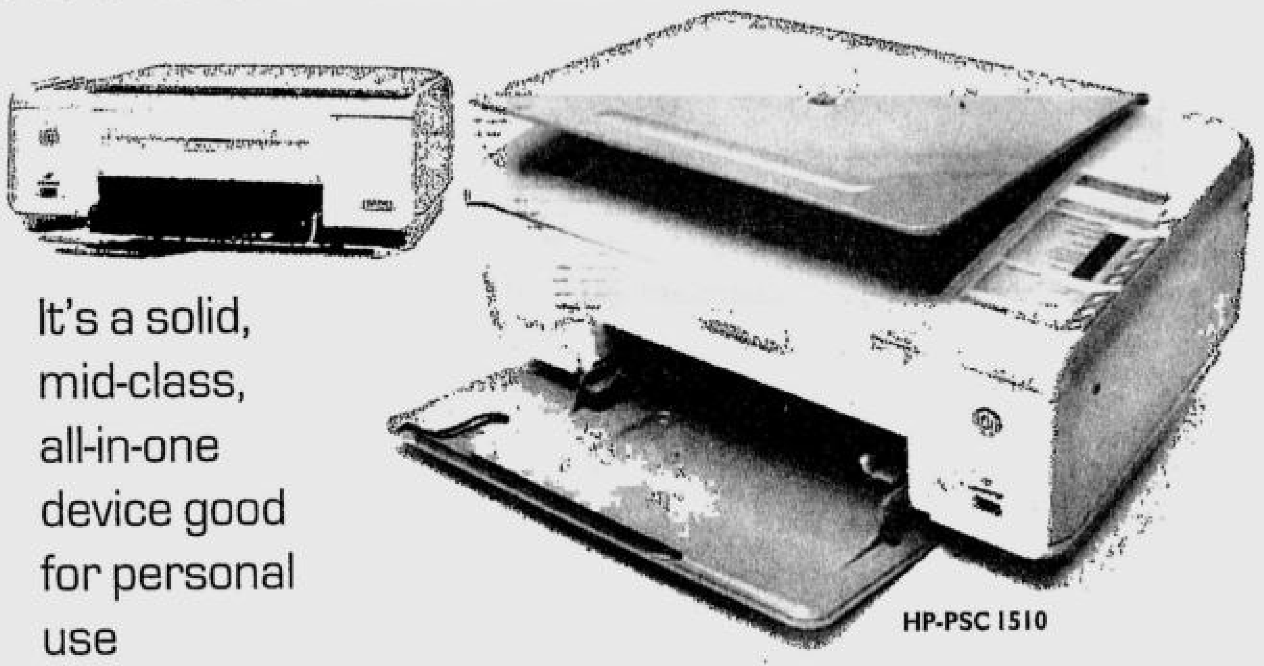
The all-in-one printer, scanner and copier Hewlett Packard HP-PSC 1510, a small and affordable do-it-all workhorse, is the latest example of this fact.

Choose an all-in-one printer

All-in-one printers can be both a blessing and bane. A blessing because you get the functions of a printer, scanner and copier in one compact machine, and a bane because only one person can use it at a time, which may be limiting for busy offices. Also, if one of the three functions breaks down, you get to loose all functions at the same time since you have to send the machine to the repair shop.

With those primary pros and cons in mind, a buyer needs to then consider the volume of work that needs to be done, as well as standard details like quality and speed of print output for the printer function, quality of scanned documents and paper size handling for the scanner, and print-output quality and speed, paper size and scanning speed for the copier.

After these, there are the incidental costs. In the case of the HP-PSC 1510, you should consider the costs of the printer ink cartridges. It is also important to consider how much space the printer will take. After that, we nitpick on certain things, such as how good service is, how the printer connects (this one uses USB), how it looks, how noisy it is, etc, until finally we get to the cost of the item itself. Whew.



It's a solid, mid-class, all-in-one device good for personal use

HP-PSC 1510

Where this one stands

First, the printer function gets the most nod because of its speed, rated at 18ppm for color, and a laser-like 20ppm for mono. There are printers that cost twice as much and are slower.

The quality isn't especially thrilling, but is acceptable enough to fall into the standard "good enough" variety. Set at photo-quality output, however, the HP-PSC 1510, with its six cartridges, produces pretty good results and, with good-quality shots, can probably produce pages worthy of framing.

The flatbed scanner is pretty standard stuff, allowing paper sizes of 8.5 x 11 inches, situated at the top and opening from the front for easy access. There is no automatic document feeder (ADF) option, so folks who plan to scan whole documents on a regular basis may need to look elsewhere.

Both printer and scanner work to combine for a passable work-quality 1200 pixels per inch (PPI) scanner, which, given its limitations, will work for the occasional quick copy, no heavy stuff. Again, quite acceptable only if you know that's what you need and have studied your requirements well beforehand.

Where it stands out

Not everything is standard with the HP-PSC 1510. It comes with Pictbridge functionality, which will automatically make it an option for those with digital cameras who are looking to print their pictures quickly without having to pass them through a computer.

Then you have the price. Several websites estimate the cost at approximately P5,000 to P9,000. Granted that this might vary wildly once you see it in local stores, trust me when I say that's still a pretty good deal for an HP all-in-one.

Finally, you have the brand, and that's where the Digital Exchange at Glorietta 3, Ayala Malls factor in. Being a Hewlett Packard product at the very least should reduce your apprehensions, but once you need to check the product, look no farther than the HP store at the Digital Exchange.

In addition to the fact that this is an HP store itself, and not a reseller or dealer, you can get a hands-on and direct feel of the product. In other places, you can only stare at the box or read the brochure.

Overall, the HP-PSC 1510 is a solid, mid-class, all-in-one device aimed directly at the single user in a small office or at the home-office environment for business or personal use. If you fit this demographic, it'd be best to take a trip to Glorietta 3's Digital Exchange and see the printer for yourself.

Robinsons Department Store

Get a FREE Gift*

*with a minimum single receipt purchase of P500

Promo ends January 31, 2006
Actual design may vary from item shown.

www.rds.com.ph
See Mechanics Poster for details
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0169 Series of 2006

Robinsons Galleria Flagship Store
Robinsons Malls | Waltermart Malls | Tutuban Center | Metropolis Star Alabang | Festival Mall Alabang | Nepo Mall Pampanga

We have a winner!

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD BIANCA Guerrero of St. Scholastica's College, Manila, has won a Canon Pixma iP3000, thanks to her PowerPoint skills. Bianca, we're sure you want to start giving your new printer a workout, so please call Ching de la Cruz at 8978808 for details on how to claim your prize.

You, too, can be a winner!

This week, 2bU! and Digital Exchange are giving away an HP-PSC 1510. If you want to join our contest, tell us why you deserve to win this printer in the most creative way you can. E-mail your entries to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph. Don't forget your name, school/office and contact info!